

The Signs of the Times, vol. 8

ESR

Ellet Joseph Waggoner

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1882

January 5, 1882

“Signs of Christ’s Second Coming” *The Signs of the Times*, 8, 1.

E. J. Waggoner

In our brief examination of Scripture, we have found that the personal, visible coming of Christ is a fact that admits of no dispute. To deny it is to deny the plainest teaching of the New Testament. The next question that naturally arises is, Have any signs been given by which we may know something concerning the time? Is there any probability that this awful event may take place in our day? But we do not find people generally concerning themselves much in regard to the matter. By far the larger part of mankind desire to hear nothing of it. Some ignore it entirely; others say it is spiritual, or in the past; while others admit all the points which we have thus far examined, but they say that it is impossible for any body to know anything about it. They say that for a man to inquire concerning it is prying into the secrets of the Almighty. Arguing from their own desires, they think that he will not come in their day at least, and imagine that ignorance or forgetfulness will excuse them from all responsibility to the matter. *SITI January 5, 1882, page 7.1*

But the Lord will certainly come, and no amount of indifference will cause him to delay. Moreover, some persons will be alive, and will see him come. Now it is not in accordance with God’s dealings with men in the past, to spring any great event on them unawares. “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.” *Amos 3:7*. Every judgment has been preceded by a warning, and ample time has been given to prepare for it. It was so in the case of the flood, the destruction of Sodom, the Babylonish captivity, the destruction of Jerusalem, and other instances. Reasoning from analogy alone, we should conclude that this event, so vastly more important than any of those mentioned, should also be preceded by a warning. And we learn that this is so from *1 Thessalonians 5:1-4*: “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For

yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.... But ye, brethren are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.” Paul is here speaking to those who shall be “alive and remain” to the coming of the Lord; see *chap. 4:16, 17*; and his language proves that such will know of that event.*SITI January 5, 1882, page 7.2*

But because this was addressed to the Thessalonians, some have argued that the apostles and early Christians expected the Lord in their day, and were disappointed-that we have no more duty to look for his coming than people have had in all ages since his first advent. “He may come to-day, and he may not come for a thousand years or more,” they frequently say; but the Bible gives no authority for any such statement; and the actions of those who say so, plainly show that they themselves do not believe it.*SITI January 5, 1882, page 7.3*

It is just as contrary to the Bible to say that people might with propriety have expected Christ to come at any period in the past, since his first advent, as it is to say that he will not come at all. There were some in Paul’s day who thought that the coming of the Lord was near, but he disabused their minds in the following language: “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” *2 Thessalonians 2:1-4*. All agree that this “man of sin” is the Papacy, which resulted from the “falling away” from the simplicity of the gospel. Until that power had arisen, and had run its course of blasphemy and oppression, it was not proper for men to teach that the coming of the Lord was at hand; it is, therefore, very important to the proper understanding of our subject, to know the facts concerning the rise and progress of the Papacy.*SITI January 5, 1882, page 7.4*

Without entering into any exposition of the prophecy, for lack of space, I will simply state that Bishop Newton, Sir Isaac Newton, Dr. Scott, and other eminent commentators agree that Paul's "man of sin" is identical with the "little horn" of *Daniel 7*, and refers to the Papacy. In *Daniel 7:25* its actions are described thus: "And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." By comparing this text with *Revelation 12:6, 14*, we learn that the "time and times and the dividing of time" is twelve hundred and sixty days. This, if it were literal time, would be an insignificant length of time for the continuance of a persecuting power. But we must remember that the power is represented under the symbol of a beast; and in order for the prophecy to be harmonious, the time must also be symbolical. Turning to *Ezekiel 4:6* we find that in the prophecy a day is used for a year. Applying this rule to the prophecy in question, we have twelve hundred and sixty years. The Papacy then, was to continue with power to persecute, twelve hundred and sixty years. *SITI January 5, 1882, page 7.5*

We next inquire when the Papacy was developed sufficiently to fill the specifications of the prophecy. We find that in the year A.D. 538, Justinian's decree that the bishop of Rome should be the head of all the churches, went into effect. This gave the Bishop of Rome power to decide what was heresy, and to call people to account for manifestations of it. From that time onward, the most blasphemous assumptions were made by this self-styled "viceregent of the Son of God," and persecutions without number were carried on in the name of Christianity. This meets the terms of the prophecy fully. Now can we find any event at the end of twelve hundred and sixty years that would mark the downfall of this system of oppression? In 1798 just twelve hundred and sixty years later, Berthier, a noted French general, took Pope Pius VI. Prisoner and carried him into exile, where he died. Although another individual was soon after proclaimed pope, the power was broken, never to reach its former greatness. The power of the pope has gradually wasted away, until nothing remains to him now but a name; and although the will to persecute is as active as ever, the power to do it openly, ceased at that time. *SITI January 5, 1882, page 7.6*

Now as to the bearing of all this on the subject of Christ's coming. In answer to his disciple's question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and the end of the world?" *Matthew 24:3*, Christ gave a brief outline of the condition of the world to the end of time. After warning them in *verses 15-21* of the destruction of Jerusalem, he spoke of a time of "great tribulation" that should shortly follow, "such as was not since the beginning of the world." The destruction of Jerusalem is not referred to here, for this reason: This tribulation was to come upon God's people, for he said: "And except those days should be shortened, there should *no* flesh be saved; but *for the elect's sake* those days shall be shortened." *Verse 22*. Now when the final destruction of Jerusalem took place there were no Christians in the city, for all had fled according to the command of Christ. The time of trouble here referred to, then, must be the long period of papal persecution. And this corresponds with the statement in *verse 22*, for, as the result of the Reformation, the persecution actually ceased some years before the year 1798. *SITI January 5, 1882, page 7.7*

We now have the data for a sign that of itself should be sufficient if there were no other. Jesus said: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light." *Matthew 24:29*. As recorded by Mark, the language is still more definite. "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light." *Mark 10:24*. A little while before the year 1798, then, this wonderful sign should have occurred. As a matter of fact, this prediction was fulfilled in the dark day of May 19, 1780. Of this day "Webster's Unabridged Dictionary," speaks as follows:-*SITI January 5, 1882, page 7.8*

"DARK DAY, THE. May 19, 1890-so called on account of a remarkable darkness on that day extending over all New England. In some places, persons could not see to read common print in the open air for several hours together. Birds sang their evening song, disappeared, and became silent; fowls went to roost; cattle sought the barn-yard; and candles were lighted in the houses. The obscuration began about ten o'clock in the morning and continued till the middle of the next night, but with differences of degree and duration in different places..... The true cause of this remarkable phenomenon is unknown." *SITI January 5, 1882, page 7.9*

And Herschel the astronomer said:-*SITI January 5, 1882, page 7.10*

“The dark day in northern America was one of those wonderful phenomena of nature, which will always be read of with interest, but which philosophy is at a loss to explain.”*SITI January 5, 1882, page 7.11*

It has been well said that science is at a loss to explain this wonderful phenomenon, although numerous attempts to explain it have been made. But its value as a sign does not consist in its being unexplainable. Its value consists in the fact that it occurred just when our Saviour had said it would, more than seventeen hundred years before. If there had been a hundred other days equally as dark, it would not affect this testimony in the least. To illustrate: A man going on a journey is told that just before he reaches his destination he will come to a large tract of woods inclosed by a high fence, and on the other side of the woods, and just within the inclosure, he will find a log house. Now when he sees this house, just where he was told it would be, he is sure that he is on the right road, although he may have passed many similar houses. So in the case before us. It is a fact, however, that the dark day of 1780 stands alone and unparalleled.*SITI January 5, 1882, page 7.12*

“And the moon shall not give her light.” This was fulfilled in the night following the dark day. Mr. Tenney of Exeter, N. H., said of that night:-*SITI January 5, 1882, page 8.1*

“I could not help conceiving at the time, that if every luminous body in the universe had been shrouded in impenetrable darkness, or struck from existence, the darkness could not have been more complete. A sheet of white paper held within a few inches of the eyes, was equally invisible with the blackest velvet.”*SITI January 5, 1882, page 8.2*

Other testimony might be given, but it is unnecessary as the facts are not doubted by any.*SITI January 5, 1882, page 8.3*

“And the stars shall fall from heaven.” This is the next sign, and was fulfilled Nov. 13, 1833, in the wonderful display when many now living well remember. Professor Olmstead of Yale College said it

was probably “the greatest display of celestial fireworks that has ever been since the foundation of the world.” *SITI January 5, 1882, page 8.4*

If any one says that these phenomena have no significance, -no connection whatever with the coming of the Lord -then I ask what they will do with our Saviour’s words? Are they not to be fulfilled? Christ was here answering an important question which his disciples had asked him, and we cannot think that he would deceive them or put them off with an evasive answer. His language is very simple and literal. Why can we not believe signs that our Saviour gave, as well as those which we receive from men? If one of our friends goes away and tells us of some event by which we may know when to look for him, we do not think of doubting his word. Our Lord has done this, and has placed his signs in the heavens, so that they may be known by all; and if we neglect them, shall we not be without excuse? The world was once condemned by the preaching of Noah; what then will be the condemnation of those who reject infinitely greater light? *SITI January 5, 1882, page 8.5*

But our Saviour does not leave the matter here. He says: “Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.” This is a forcible illustration. Nobody has a doubt that summer is near, when the leaves put forth in the spring; and we may be just as certain, now that “all these things” have come to pass, that the Lord is near. There is no opportunity for doubt. It is indeed, a sin not to be certain of the nearness of the event. *SITI January 5, 1882, page 8.6*

It is true that we cannot tell just the day that summer will come. After the buds begin to swell, there may be bitter frosts, and summer may be delayed; but still we are sure that summer is not far distant. In this the parable holds good. Christ says, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man.” For a wise purpose the exact time of the event is withheld from us, and it is idle for us to speculate in regard to it, but yet we may be just as certain that it is near “even at the doors.” And to put the fact beyond all doubt he says: “Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be

fulfilled.” That is, the generation that shall witness these signs, or a portion of them, shall see the final consummation of all things. This is indeed a solemn thought. Many of those now living shall see the Lord come. What should be our position, then, at this time? Our Saviour himself gives the answer: “Watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, WATCH.” *SITI January 5, 1882, page 8.7*

February 2, 1882

“Who is to Blame?” The Signs of the Times, 8, 5.

E. J. Waggoner

There are very many people who want peace, but they want it after their own ideas. It is quite common for people who have taken a wrong course, to lay the blame of the trouble that inevitably follows upon some one who, so far from following in the wrong, has endeavored to set things right. They say, “If you will let us alone, there will be no trouble.” Many children are very patterns of propriety so long as everything goes to suit them, but when their tracks are crossed, there is trouble. Then the trouble is charged, not to their own perverseness, but to their parents, or those who try to check their wrong-doing. It is a painful fact that these children do not always lose this trait when they grow up. It is not easy to live under condemnation, and, therefore, the natural mind seeks an excuse for sin, and an *excuse* is not very hard to find. *SITI February 2, 1882, page 55.1*

An instance in point is seen in the case of Ahab. His course is briefly stated in the following scripture: “And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him.... And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.” *1 Kings 16:30-33*. Elijah was a man of God, who dared to stand boldly for the worship of the true God, even though he were the only one in the nation who was not an idolater. His life alone was a constant rebuke to the wicked king, and his testimony was plain. Through him the Lord spoke and said that on account of the wickedness of Israel there should be no rain throughout the land. This came to pass, and great suffering necessarily followed. *SITI February 2, 1882, page 55.2*

But did Ahab acknowledge that he himself was the cause of all this? Hear him. “And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel?” *1 Kings 18:17*. Like a petulant child, he blamed the one who was trying to save him. But

Elijah stated the case in its true light when he answered: "I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim." *Verse 18.SITI February 2, 1882, page 55.3*

But human nature is the same now as in the days of Ahab. A few months ago the following paragraph appeared in a report of labor, which a first-day preacher sent to the organ of his denomination:-*SITI February 2, 1882, page 55.4*

"Our next was at Battle Creek. This is the headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventists. As Saturday is one of the busiest days of a city, and Sabbath, [Sunday], the great working day of the Adventists, and as the ungodly are embolden to respect neither, it is hard to tell in Battle Creek whether it is Saturday, Sunday, or Monday. Thus the Seventh-day system spreads infidelity."*SITI February 2, 1882, page 55.5*

Note the parallel. Ahab led Israel into idolatry. Elijah fearlessly preached and practiced the religion of the true God. The result of this was that many of the people halted "between two opinions." *1 Kings 18:21*. They did not believe anything. In the modern instance the Seventh-day Adventists teach, and try to conscientiously live out, the commandments of God. This includes the observance of God's Sabbath, the day which he rested upon, blessed, sanctified, called his own, and commanded all men to observe. See *Genesis 2:2, 3; Exodus 20:8-11; Isaiah 58:13*, and many other texts. The great mass of mankind, following in the wake of papal lawlessness and assumption, trample upon God's holy day, and exalt a rival in its place. In consequence of this, some people accept neither. They do not take the trouble to examine for themselves to see which is right, and reject both as of no consequence.*SITI February 2, 1882, page 55.6*

Now who is to blame for their infidelity? Is it those who are walking according to God's rule, or those who walk in a way of their own devising? In the case of Ahab and Elijah all will agree. Elijah did right. He is looked upon by all Bible readers as a model of integrity; and such he was. All the trouble and unbelief that existed is chargeable solely to Ahab's wicked course, and to those who

followed him. Would it not, then, be more in accordance with the facts to say that first-day keeping, or at least Sabbath-breaking, leads to infidelity? If God's word remains the same now that it was four thousand years ago, it would. He gave the Sabbath as a sign, that men might know that he was the true God. *Exodus 31:13; Ezekiel 20:20*. If men had always kept the Sabbath of the Lord, remembering that it is the memorial of his creative power, there would never have been any idolatry or infidelity. *SITI February 2, 1882, page 55.7*

The question to be decided is simply this: Does it make a wrong thing right, for a majority to practice it? Is it better to disobey God with the many, or to obey him with the few? Will God alter his laws, and make wrong right, because the majority do wrong? His word says: "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." *Exodus 22:2*; and, "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished." *Proverbs 11:21*. It is safe to believe these statements, in spite of the assertions of men to the contrary. Although the gospel of Christ is a gospel of peace, it does not contemplate a peace purchased by a sacrifice of right-doing. Christ foresaw that men would be shaken when they saw divisions on account of his doctrine, and he forewarned his disciples in *Luke 12:51-53*. Let men deplore divisions, and let them endeavor to promote harmony; but let them labor only for Bible union, and not fear to say, with Joshua, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; ... but as for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord." *SITI February 2, 1882, page 55.8*

February 9, 1882

“What They Are Doing?” The Signs of the Times, 8, 6.

E. J. Waggoner

In accordance with our design to note the progress of the Sunday movement, we give below a few extracts from the *Oakland Times* report of a mass-meeting held Sunday, January 29, in the First Congregational Church of this city. The meeting was largely attended, and the leading ministers of the city were among the speakers. The animus of the movement is better shown by these speeches, than by anything else. *SITI February 9, 1882, page 67.1*

“Mr. Whitney, President of the Home Protection Association, introduced Rev. Dr. Todd, who said that there is a law on the statute book requiring us to observe the Sabbath [Sunday] and it should be enforced. There is a law on the statute books which prevents the killing of game during certain seasons. The law is enforced, and recently a young nimrod was fined sixty dollars for shooting game. The movement in regard to the Sunday law is not transient, but is deeply rooted and the nation will prevail in that matter. If a stranger visits your house you are not required to break any of your household regulations. America established the Sabbath as a household regulation, and we should observe it.” *SITI February 9, 1882, page 67.2*

“Rev. Dr. Sprecher was introduced and argued that the law is not contrary to the genius of our government. There is not a nation that can exist without a religion. It is necessary in the organization of a nation that the prevailing religion of the people should be recognized. People must be protected in the exercise of their religion. That is a part of the rights of the people. This is a Christian nation and the laws are made to respect and protect the people in the exercise of their religion. The Sunday law is in perfect keeping with the Constitution of the United States. This is a Christian country and the law was made for the protection of the Christian people.” *SITI February 9, 1882, page 67.3*

No comments are needed on the above paragraph. They contain

the same sophistries which the advocates of the Religious Amendment to the Constitution have always used. The following, however, is something of a new departure that is not new to the students of prophecy. After reading it, please turn and read *Revelation 13:16, 17. SITI February 9, 1882, page 67.4*

“Dr. McLane delivered a brief address in which he said that home protection is going to be a power in politics. He had been dealing with a person who opens on Sunday, but he had paid him his last rent. He wanted the breeze to blow into the stores, and exhorted the audience not to deal with those who do business on Sunday. The politicians were handled without gloves and the reverend gentleman made an eloquent appeal in behalf of the Home Protection Association.” *SITI February 9, 1882, page 67.5*

And this, they tell us, is religious liberty! If it is, may we be delivered from religious persecution. It will not be a difficult matter for any reader to decide whether this movement is in the interests of temperance or of the Sunday. Much enthusiasm was manifested at this meeting, and a large amount was contributed for the aid of the Association. *SITI February 9, 1882, page 67.6*

As showing the feeling of the opposite party, the following account of a trial in San Leandro, Alameda Co., is in point. The proprietor of a hotel, together with twelve other business men, was arrested for keeping open on Sunday. His was to be the test case. An immense crowd attended the trial. Able lawyers had been secured by both sides. The jury, after a consultation of about five minutes, rendered a verdict of “Not guilty.” An uproar immediately ensued. The crowd threw their hats into the air, and cheered again and again. In their frantic joy, benches were kicked over, and the Judge was powerless to secure order. After adjournment the hilarity was kept up for several hours. *SITI February 9, 1882, page 67.7*

It will be seen that the feeling is intense on both sides. The conflict will be a bitter one. We know from the word of God what the final result will be, and need waste no time in speculation. Our only business should be to spread the light of truth. Let us do this with our might. E. J. W. *SITI February 9, 1882, page 67.8*

February 16, 1882

“Our Position” The Signs of the Times, 8, 7.

E. J. Waggoner

We are well aware that some honest people, knowing our temperance principles, wonder that we are opposed to the Sunday law; and others, not so honest, have seen fit to revile us, classing us with the lowest rabble, and accuse us of favoring intemperance. To both classes we repeat what we have before stated: The law is not a liquor law, but a Sunday law; it is not in the interest of temperance, but of the Sunday; it is given in the code under the general heading of offenses against religion, and prescribes that *all places of business* shall be closed on the “Christian Sabbath.” A strict endorsement of the law would affect saloon keepers less than any other class of men. *SITI February 16, 1882, page 78.1*

This being the case, it is not at all inconsistent with our temperance principles for us to decline to help enforce the law. Indeed, should we join with its friends, we should be recreant to our faith, and violate our own convictions of right; for the Lord has said: “Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work.” The command to keep holy the seventh day is imperative; *permission*, at least, equally emphatic, is given to labor on the six days, Sunday included; and a permission from God is of more weight than a command from man. We do not try to force any body to keep the Sabbath of the Lord; why, then, should we give the Sunday greater prominence? Would not such an act be in violation of the spirit of the commandment, even though we outwardly observed the seventh day? It certainly would. *SITI February 16, 1882, page 78.2*

As to our convictions on the subject of temperance, they may be learned from the columns of the SIGNS. We are for prohibition. We shall not cease to expose the evils of the liquor traffic, so far as lies in our power. But inasmuch as Sunday is in no sense a sacred day, we cannot become a party to a transaction that will elevate it over other purely secular days. The following paragraph from the *Lever*, a paper wholly devoted to the cause of temperance, expresses our

sentiments exactly. We hope no one will accuse the *Lever* of being in league with saloons and brothels:-*SITI February 16, 1882, page 78.3*

"We do not believe, however, that any journal which does not openly and flatly denounce saloonism on week days as well as Sundays will ever command any very vast amount of respect when it pleads in favor of the suppression of Sunday saloonism. The fact is, murder is just as foul a crime when committed on Thursday as when committed on Sunday; and what we want is an open, frank, decided, emphatic, unequivocal, Anglo-Saxon denunciation of saloons and saloonism everywhere and all the time." *SITI February 16, 1882, page 78.4*

One word more in general to our relation to the Sunday question. We are opposed to the law merely from principle, not for pecuniary gain. We do not, however, intend to make any demonstration against it, or say anything in any way derogatory to those who favor it. We are not in sympathy with the so-called "League of Freedom." While they join hand in hand, for selfish purposes; and while in the church "there is a conspiracy of her prophets," we, remain neutral, so far as acts of opposition or friendliness are concerned. But the command has been given concerning the Sabbath question: "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." *Isaiah 58:1*. We may not neglect this command and remain guiltless. Having the light, it is our duty, not only to walk in it, but to let it shine for others. We must let the people know the claims of God's law, and those of its rival, that they may choose whom they will serve; and this we shall continue to do "with malice toward none; with charity for all." E. J. W. *SITI February 16, 1882, page 78.5*

February 23, 1882

“A Few Indications” *The Signs of the Times*, 8, 8.

E. J. Waggoner

It is unfortunate for those who claim that the present Sunday agitation is only a temperance movement, that the facts do not agree with their statements. The law itself, as has been shown, is purely a Sunday law; and the speeches of some of the leaders in the movement, show that their object is the better observance of the Sunday by all classes. The terms “sanitary regulation,” “police regulation,” and “temperance movement” are given to the law, in order that it may be popular with a certain class who do not readily discern its real import. *SITI February 23, 1882, page 91.1*

Brother Frank Lamb, who has been laboring in Castroville and vicinity, this winter, related to us the following incident that came under his personal observation, which shows the spirit that actuates some, at least, of the defenders of the Sunday: In the course of his labor a German, who was a blacksmith by trade, commenced to keep the Sabbath. It was necessary, however, that he devote six days to his labor, and as he now closed his shop on Sabbath, he opened it on Sunday. The next day one of the trustees of the Presbyterian Church had him arrested for working on Sunday. He was convicted, and sentenced to pay a fine of twelve dollars, or spend twelve days in jail. He chose the latter. The jail accommodations, however, were so wretched, that after four days' imprisonment he paid the remainder of his fine and was released, and returned to his work, still determined to keep the commandment-to work six days and rest the seventh. *SITI February 23, 1882, page 91.2*

Soon after this, a minister of the Presbyterian Church-a man of standing in the community-preached a sermon on the enforcement of the Sunday, in which he said that no sacrifice was too great for the Government to make in enforcing the Sunday Law, even to the taking of life! *SITI February 23, 1882, page 92.1*

It cannot be urged that such utterances as these are contrary to the

spirit of the movement. At the last mass-meeting held in Oakland, one of the leading ministers advised his hearers to deal with none who would not close on Sunday. He said that he had been dealing with a man who kept open on Sunday, but should do so no more. It was not that the man was engaged in an illegitimate business, but that he engaged in it on Sunday. *SITI February 23, 1882, page 92.2*

It is true that there are many who deprecate any such language-who respect the religious convictions of others. There are those who think that the movement can be confined to the closing of saloons. Such will sometime see their mistake. It does not take long for such a movement to pass beyond the control of the conservative few. It is easier to start a fire than to put it out. *SITI February 23, 1882, page 92.3*

But we have no idea that even these conservative ones will take warning. We do not write with any such object. The "sure word of prophecy" shows that a religious persecution will come, and we see at present the premonitory symptoms. We would do nothing either to help or hinder the movement, except to sound the warning cry, that in that time of trouble all who will, may have the truth of God for their shield and buckler. E. J. W. *SITI February 23, 1882, page 92.4*

March 2, 1882

“Almost Discouraged” The Signs of the Times, 8, 9.

E. J. Waggoner

“I am so weak, and have so much to overcome, that I am almost discouraged.” How often do we hear this expression in social meeting. It is the burden of some testimonies. It seems as though some people think that there is special merit in depreciating themselves. They almost take pride in their humility. Others do not seem to know that there is any better way for them to do. But however true it may be, or however often it is repeated, it cannot but be displeasing to God. We are commanded to “exhort one another,” and to “provoke unto love and good works,” but such language is anything but encouraging. Its effect is seen on the individual who uses it. It soon becomes habitual, for each time it is uttered the discouragement increases. It grows by repetition, but it is withering to the soul. *SITI March 2, 1882, page 103.1*

It is the language of unbelief. Although the individual may be unconscious of the fact, the spirit which prompts it is the same as that possessed by the ten spies who brought back an evil report. God had said: “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” Having this promise, it was exceedingly wicked for them to say they could not possess the land. On this occasion, as well as at other times of murmuring, God showed his great displeasure. In this instance we see the natural result of such distrust. They did not enter the promised land. “And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swore to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.” *Numbers 14:26-30*. They said they could not go, and they did not; but Caleb and Joshua, who said, “Let us

go up at once, and possess it; for we are able to overcome it," did enter the promised land. *SITI March 2, 1882, page 103.2*

Distrust and faint-heartedness are as displeasing to God now as then. His promises are abundant. Listen to a few: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." *Hebrews 4:15, 16*. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." *James 1:5*. God does not upbraid us, *does not* taunt us with our weakness. A child has not the strength of a man, and no father will ridicule his infant child because of its weakness. Its very helplessness appeals to his sympathy. So God says, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." *Psalms 103:13, 14*. But it is necessary to "ask in faith, nothing wavering" for "without faith it is impossible to please Him." Again we are exhorted: "Be content with such things as ye have for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." *Hebrews 13:5*; and yet again: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" *Romans 8:32*. One more passage ought forever to stop all our murmurings and doubtings: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." *1 Corinthians 10:13*. Read also *Hebrews 2:18; 12:1-4; 13:8; Philippians 4:4, 13*; and especially *Psalms 103:17, 18*, and *Lamentations 3:22-33*. *SITI March 2, 1882, page 103.3*

Do we really believe these promises? If we did would we not appropriate them to ourselves? We read them, and say we believe them, and yet to very many they seem vague and unreal. But if they are to be of any benefit to us we must consider them as real, and make our requests accordingly. Our belief is measured by our actions, not by our words. Is it not as much infidelity to disbelieve a promise that God has given as it is to disbelieve any other portion of his word? Let us take heed lest there be found in any of us "an evil

heart of unbelief in departing from God.”*SITI March 2, 1882, page 103.4*

But ought we not to be sensible of our weakness? Certainly; the more so the better. But we are not to think of it in such a way as to become discouraged. There are two ways of looking at our own frailties. One is to brood over them, lose sight of God’s willingness to help, and become discouraged. This pleases Satan. If we are prone to doubt and become faint-hearted, he will assist us to see more lions in the way than really exist. And such a course is really a form of selfishness. The individual becomes so intensely self-conscious that he can take cognizance of nothing else. He thinks of himself so much that he loses sight of Christ. He imagines that he himself must do the great work that is to be done, and when a few attempts show him the impossibility of it, he becomes discouraged. Another way to consider them is in the light of the promises of God. When we do this we have every reason to be encouraged, and God is pleased with us. The more we distrust ourselves while trusting God, the stronger we will be, for God has said: “My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” 2 *Corinthians 12:9*. And in view of this, Paul was led to say: “Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake; for *when I am weak then am I strong*.” No man ever had more trials than Paul had, or felt less confidence in himself; but he believed God’s promises, and it was no vain boast for him to say: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”*SITI March 2, 1882, page 103.5*

Thus it was with Caleb and Joshua. It was not vain self-confidence which led them to say, “We are well able to overcome it.” Hear them: “If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us; their defense is departed from them, and *the Lord is with us*: fear them not.” *Numbers 14:8, 9*. So the Lord is with us; his promises are multiplied to us. We have the accumulated proofs of his power and goodness through thousands of years past. It is far more sinful for us to distrust God now, than it was for ancient Israel. Then, “let us hold fast the profession of our faith

without wavering; for he is faithful that promised.” E. J. W.*SITI March 2, 1882, page 103.6*

“Mixed” The Signs of the Times, 8, 9.

E. J. Waggoner

Consistency is a rare jewel, and nowhere do we find less of it than among the advocates of Sunday observance. A curious example was lately given in a meeting of the “Home Protection Society,” an organization to enforce the Sunday Law. In one of their resolutions it was stated that the weekly rest and worship of the “Christian Sabbath,” is a right guaranteed both by the laws of God and of the State. Later in the meeting, the individual who offered the above mentioned resolution, stated that he thought that Seventh-day Adventists, in carrying on their printing business on Sunday, “do not violate the letter and spirit of the law of man, but they do violate the law of God.” Now here’s the rub. The advocates of the Sunday have claimed that the law which they were seeking to enforce was simply a “police regulation,” that there was no thought of enforcing the law as a religious enactment. These same individuals too, at the society meeting referred to, regretted that Brother White, when arrested as manager of the “Pacific Press,” for working on Sunday, did not plead guilty. But an eminent member of the same society thinks that he has violated the law of God, but not any law of man, either in letter or in spirit. Of what, then, would they have desired him to plead guilty? Evidently of nothing, unless they hold that a Police Court is empowered to enforce the law of God. It has puzzled us to know just on what grounds the Sunday advocates stand, but we are not likely to have our curiosity gratified in this request, at least not until they find out for themselves.*SITI March 2, 1882, page 108.1*

One thing, however, we would request as a special favor. We claim to keep the law of God. In fact, the requirements of our denomination are simply to “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” But our friends say we are violating the law of God. We ask, Wherein? We think that, as a Christian duty, they ought to apprise us of our error. It will not be enough to say that we work on Sunday. We know that, but what we want is a plain statement of the law of God that we violate by so doing. Something

if it exists, that shows that Sunday has any more claims as a day of rest than Thursday or Friday. We shall not be exacting; a single passage will suffice. All the commandments of God with which we are familiar are very plain—"thou shalt," and "thou shalt not." Give us, then, a statement of it that is plain enough to convict a man in any court-before a jury of unprejudiced intelligent men, and we will plead guilty, and at once and forevermore keep "the venerable day of the sun." We are willing to be enlightened, but while we find no law of God in favor of the Sunday, we shall believe with Paul, that "where no law is, there is no transgression." E. J. W.*SITI March 2, 1882, page 108.2*

"Questions Answered" The Signs of the Times, 8, 9.

E. J. Waggoner

1. What is the nature of the "strong drink" referred to in *Deuteronomy 14:20*. It apparently recommends that which other Scriptures prohibit.*SITI March 2, 1882, page 108.3*

2. Are we to understand from *Numbers 11:31* that the quails fell to the depth of three feet over so great an area of country as here indicated? C. E. W.*SITI March 2, 1882, page 108.4*

1. It is not in Paul's writings alone that there are "things hard to be understood." And it is not alone the "unlearned" that have stumbled over the subject of "strong drink" as found in the Bible. In this case, as in all, it is safe to start out with the assurance that the Bible does not contradict itself. The Hebrew word *shebar*, which is translated "strong drink," means that which *satiates*, as well as that which *intoxicates*. Kitto says: "It had in all probability a much wider signification than is now conveyed by the phrase 'strong drink.'" He classes the various senses of the word under three heads. 1. Luscious saccharine drink, or sweet syrup, especially sugar or honey of dates. From it are derived words meaning "dainty," "dessert," "sweetmeat." 2. Date or palm wine in its fresh or unfermented state. 3. Fermented, or intoxicating palm wine. It is doubtless the first of these that is referred to in *Deuteronomy 14:26*. The "strong drink" of the first class, was not injurious in itself, but was forbidden whenever the circumstances required

abstemiousness, as in *Judges 13:4*. It is a well-known fact that much sugar or sweetmeats produce a state of fullness, lassitude, and dullness. It was on this account, doubtless, that these things were forbidden to those who “separated themselves unto the Lord.” *Numbers 6:2-4*. The use of the last class, that which intoxicates, is not countenanced in the Bible. *SITI March 2, 1882, page 108.5*

2. It is not a necessary conclusion, even from our English version, that the quails lay on the ground to a depth of two cubits, and the original does not warrant it. The sense is conveyed by the Vulgate, a literal translation of which is: “They flew in the air two cubits high above the earth.” E. J. W. *SITI March 2, 1882, page 108.6*

“Sunday Law Tract” The Signs of the Times, 8, 9.

E. J. Waggoner

Last week an edition of 5,000 of this tract issued, and another edition is already called for. The Oakland church has taken and distributed 1,500, the San Francisco church 1,000, and other churches that ordered only a few hundred, are calling for more. The demand for it convinces us that it is the right thing at the right time. Our object in circulating the tract was not to stir up strife, but to take advantage of an interest that had been awakened by the friends of the Sunday, to place the truth of the Bible on this question before the people. The truth on the Sabbath question has probably been brought before more people in California during the past two weeks than ever before. *SITI March 2, 1882, page 108.7*

That the prejudices of some should be aroused by it, is no more than could be expected. The truth has ever met with opposers, and we know of no way to avoid opposition except by keeping silent in regard to the truth, and this we cannot do. On the whole, however, the tract has been well received, and has received favorable notice from the press of this city. Some persons accused us of playing into the hands of the “League of Freedom,” of desiring to enforce the observance of the Sabbath, and other things equally absurd. But none who have candidly read it, find any difficulty in understanding exactly our position. *SITI March 2, 1882, page 108.8*

We have nowhere charged the "Home Protection Society" with the arrest of the manager of the Pacific Press. They disclaim any connection with it, and we give them the benefit of the supposition that when they started the movement they did not foresee the result. Some evidently thought that a law which is general in its application could be enforced upon simply a few. They doubtless have learned better by this time. The *Oakland Times* justly says: "The obstacles in the way of a Sunday Law are much greater than had been anticipated when the agitation was first started." One of two things must now be done: The law must either be strictly enforced or else repealed. Whatever happens we are content, so long as the agitation serves to make the truth of God more clear to the people. E. J. W. *SITI March 2, 1882, page 108.9*

March 9, 1882

“Can We Keep the Sabbath?” The Signs of the Times, 8, 10.

E. J. Waggoner

There are thousands throughout the United States and in Europe who are ready at once to answer this question in the affirmative, for they know by experience that it is possible. Indeed, the question really admits of only one answer, and that is, “Yes; we can if we want to.” But there are many persons who imagine that they cannot keep the Sabbath, and for their benefit I propose to consider some of the so-called reasons which they give. This article is not intended for those who, in order to avoid the acknowledgment that the seventh day is the Sabbath, plead that the world is round, that time has been lost, and other flimsy objections against the Sabbath. It is only for those who acknowledge the truth of the Bible, are fully convinced that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, and know that it is the duty of all men to keep it, but fancy that they are so situated that it would be impossible for them to do so. I say they fancy, for it is not so in fact. No individual was ever yet placed in such a position that he could not do what was certainly his duty to do. He might find it difficult, and perhaps unpleasant, but never impossible. *SITI March 9, 1882, page 115.1*

“I would like to keep the Sabbath,” says one, but my business will not let me.” Well, if this is really the case, then get some other business that will not hinder. If you saw that your present business was greatly injuring your health, and would cause your death in a few months, unless abandoned, you would lose no time in changing your occupation. But by disobeying God you lose his favor, and this will bring eternal death. *SITI March 9, 1882, page 115.2*

“But I could not live if I were to keep the Sabbath.” This is of the same stamp as the reason given above, and is offered alike by those who are in prosperous business, and those who labor for their daily bread. How do you know that you could not live? Are there not thousands who are keeping the Sabbath, and do not they live? Ask those who have tried it, and see what testimony they bear. It is true, you may not be able to amass quite so much property, but “what is

a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" *SITI March 9, 1882, page 115.3*

But let us consider this matter further. You say you cannot live if you keep the Sabbath. Are you sure that you can if you do not keep it? Have you any guarantee that your life will be continued indefinitely? Do those who violate God's law live any longer on an average than those who keep it? You certainly know of no one who is not subject to death. The psalmist says: "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?" *Psalm 89:48*. "It is appointed unto men once to die," and this without any distinction in regard to age or belief. Then why do you assume that you will be exempt if you do not keep the Sabbath. *SITI March 9, 1882, page 115.4*

"But," our friend will doubtless reply, "I expect, of course, to die sometime in the natural course of events, whether I keep the Sabbath or not; what I mean is, that I shall not be able to earn a living for myself and family." Well, you profess to believe the Bible; let us see what it says in regard to this matter. "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But *seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*" *Matthew 6:31-33*. Could any promise be plainer than this? If it does not mean just what it says, it does not mean anything. And God is fully able to fulfill this promise. Just consider what a vast estate he has. Here is a description of it: "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof." *Psalm 50:10-12*. Surely you need have no fear of starving, if you serve such a master as that. *SITI March 9, 1882, page 115.5*

Listen to another promise: "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, *and verily thou shalt be fed.*" *Psalm 37:3*. There you have the promise; now listen to the testimony of one who had an opportunity to know, as to how this promise is fulfilled: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the

righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.” *Verse 25*. You can verify this in your own experience if you choose. Who are they that form the great army of tramps, that wander through the country begging bread? Are they Christians, as a class? Are they those who have sunk their property in the service of God? I think no one ever saw a tramp that was noted for his piety. An active worker in the Young Men’s Christian Association says that of the hundreds who have applied for charity to the institution with which he is connected, all are irreligious persons, and that he has never known a regular attendant of church to apply for alms. Truly, “the blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.” *SITI March 9, 1882, page 115.6*

Again the Lord says: “But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.” *Deuteronomy 8:18*. No one can doubt the truth of this statement. “He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.” We could not keep ourselves alive for a single moment. All men, good and bad alike, are equally dependent on God for life and its attendant blessings. Now, if God has prospered you in the past, when you were trampling on his law, unwittingly it may be, will he not be more likely to continue his blessing if you obey him? Will he not have an especial care for his servants who cheerfully obey him? Certainly no person who professes faith in God’s word should ever fear to keep his commandments. *SITI March 9, 1882, page 115.7*

Do not, however, get the idea that abundant riches are promised to those who obey God. The psalmist saw that the wicked were “not in trouble as other men;” he saw that they had more than heart could wish; and he became envious when he saw the prosperity of the wicked. But when he went into the sanctuary of God, and understood their end (*Psalms 73:17*), then his envy ceased. He saw that God does not propose to reward either the good or the bad in this life. The wicked may well have riches in this life, for that is all the enjoyment they will ever have; and the righteous can well afford to have but little of this world’s goods, and even to suffer affliction and persecution, since for them God has reserved “an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away”-“an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” *SITI March 9, 1882, page 115.8*

But there is this difference between the wealthy sinner and the poor servant of God: There is no promise made to the transgressor of God's law. God allows the sun to shine, and the rain to fall, alike on the just and unjust. But the transgressor has no assurance that all his riches may not "take to themselves wings and fly away," and he be left a beggar; while the righteous man who may have but a bare living, has the promise that that little will be continued to him. God often permits his servants to be brought into strait places, and, in order to try their faith, to be sometimes brought where they can see no opening whatever; still his promises are sure, and cannot fail. Food and clothing are promised, and though these may be scant, yet "a little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked." *Psalm 37:16.SITI March 9, 1882, page 115.9*

One thought more: If we keep the commandments of God, we are God's servants. If we refuse to obey him, whose servants are we?—We certainly must be the servants of Satan. There is no neutral ground. "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey." Now suppose you continue in sin, and sin is nothing else but the transgression of the law (*1 John 3:4*), what is your prospect for living? Here is it: "For the wages of sin is death." *Romans 6:23*. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." *Ezekiel 18:20*. You say you cannot live if you keep all God's commandments; God says you cannot live if you do not keep them. If your statement were true, you would only lose this present life, and many men in times past have lost their lives for the truth of God, and we honor them for it; but if you disobey God, you will lose eternal life. Jesus says: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." *Matthew 16:25*. Satan may promise well, but he has nothing but the treasures of this world to offer, and they are all forfeited, so that he has really nothing to offer you. How different is the service of God. The apostle says: "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." *1 Timothy 4:8.SITI March 9, 1882, page 115.10*

But the promises of God and happiness to those who fear God are almost innumerable. Not a tithe of them has been given. Surely those mentioned are sufficient to enable anyone to trust God. Some further objections, and Scripture testimonies, may be considered

next week. E. J. W. *SITI* March 9, 1882, page 115.11

April 20, 1882

“Can We Keep the Sabbath? No. 2” *The Signs of the Times*, 8, 16.

E. J. Waggoner

One of the most common objections that people urge against keeping the Sabbath is that it is peculiar, and that very few people observe it. There are two classes of people who make use of this argument. The first class attempts to make capital out of it against the Sabbath, and argue that since the Sabbath is observed by so very few people, it cannot be right, assuming that the majority must be right. The second class believe that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, but have not the courage to live out their convictions of duty. They say, “If everybody else would keep the Sabbath, I would be glad to do so too.” *SITI April 20, 1882, page 187.1*

The first class might easily be convinced if they wished to be. Let us see to what absurdity the theory that the majority must be right will lead us. Less than four hundred years ago it was the universal belief that the earth was flat, and that it was stationary. For hundreds of years no one had thought of questioning this belief; and when, finally, a few bold spirits ventured to advance the idea that the earth is spherical, and that it moves, they were regarded as fanatics and dangerous heretics. But the proof that the earth is round was convincing, and now all enlightened nations hold to that belief. Now if it be true that the majority must be right, we must conclude that several centuries ago the earth was really flat, but that, as people advanced in knowledge it gradually assumed its present shape. Many other conclusions equally absurd must be accepted if we hold to the theory that whatever is popularly believed is right. But the advocates of that theory rarely urge it on any subject except the Sabbath. The truth is that the opinions of men have no effect whatever on facts. Men's opinions change, but the truth is always the same. *SITI April 20, 1882, page 187.2*

Those who dare not venture out alone to obey the truth, may have their faith strengthened by considering some cases that are on record. Paul says in *Romans 15:4*, that “whatsoever things were

written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”*SITI April 20, 1882, page 187.3*

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews contains a list of notable men. We are referred to Noah, who “walked with God” in an age when the “wickedness of man was great in the earth,” and “every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” It must have been no slight effort for Noah to face the world with such an unpopular truth as that the world was to be destroyed by a flood. No doubt he was jeered at in a most unmerciful manner, and considered a fool, but the event proved the wisdom of his course. Had he waited for people enough to accept the truth for that time to make it respectable, before commencing to build the ark, he would have been drowned with the rest.*SITI April 20, 1882, page 187.4*

Abraham is another individual who is held up as an example of faith. I think we do not generally realize the full extent of the sacrifice that he made when he obeyed the command, “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, and unto a land that I will show thee.” His father’s family, as we learn from *Joshua 24:2, 3*, were idolaters. No doubt he had to endure much opposition and ridicule from his relatives, for thus leaving them and going away with apparently no object whatever, without even knowing where he was going. No one who starts out to obey God in these times can have a darker prospect to all outward appearances, than Abraham had. Had he drawn back, instead of becoming the father of all the faithful, his name might never have appeared among them. Other instances might be cited indefinitely.*SITI April 20, 1882, page 187.5*

Who does not honor those moral heroes? and who has not wished that he might be even like them, and be accounted worthy to share in their reward? Well, who is there that cannot? They were men, subject to weaknesses and temptations the same as men are nowadays. They lived in the world, associated with their fellow-men, and transacted business, the same as men do now. How, then, did they become so honored of God?-Simply because they were willing to be regarded as peculiar; they thought more of God’s approval than they did of the applause of men. For this we hold them in high

esteem, yet we shrink from doing what we commend in them. We may, however, be like them if we will, for their cases are recorded, as Paul says, simply for our encouragement. *SITI April 20, 1882, page 187.6*

We shall find, if we study carefully, that the Bible says much in favor of peculiar people. The Jews were brought out from Egyptian bondage that they might serve the Lord, and be a peculiar people. Paul says in *Titus 2:14* that Christ “gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” The apostle here speaks especially to those who are “looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” It seems, then, that the people of God need not hope to become popular in these days any more than in the past. Christ was very unpopular: “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” *John 1:11*. Very few believed on him, and they were of the most despised class, and at the last even these forsook him, while he suffered the most bitter persecution. And what does he say to his disciples? If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” Those, then, who are waiting for truth to become popular before accepting it, will wait in vain. *SITI April 20, 1882, page 187.7*

One thought in regard to this expression, “peculiar people.” The idea is not meant to be conveyed that people are to strive to make themselves conspicuous by their peculiarity. The people of God are peculiar simply because they are “zealous of good works,” in a time when men (professed Christians) are “lovers of their own selves,” “despisers of those that are good,” etc. *2 Timothy 3:1-5*. Christ was peculiar in this respect, yet he was a pattern of humility. This people are to be like him; not despised on account of individual peculiarities, but because of their steadfast adherence to truth. “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” *John 15:18, 19. SITI April 20, 1882, page 187.8*

Who is not willing to suffer with Christ? When he endured so much for us, can we not endure a little for him? If it were possible for us to

get to heaven without any suffering, would we not feel ashamed to say that we had never suffered for him? We have also this to comfort us, that whenever we suffer for the truth, he suffers with us, and accounts all injury done to his people as done to himself. And to crown all, we are assured that “if we suffer we shall also reign with him,” and that “our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” E. J. W. *SITI April 20, 1882, page 187.9*

April 27, 1882

“Sunday Law Sentiment” *The Signs of the Times*, 8, 17.

E. J. Waggoner

Anti-Chinese legislation has of late been such an all-absorbing topic on the Pacific Coast, that but little space is devoted in the newspapers to the Sunday Law. Although the friends of the Sunday closing movement seem as determined as ever to press the matter, public sentiment in general does not seem to have yet reached that point where a very rigid enforcement of the law may be expected. *SITI April 27, 1882, page 199.1*

So far as we know, only four convictions have been obtained since the decision of the Supreme Court. In Oakland, the first two cases, both saloon-keepers, resulted in conviction, and in each instance the fine was placed at \$50.00, the highest amount allowed under the law. In the third case the jury returned a verdict of “Not guilty,” almost immediately. *SITI April 27, 1882, page 199.2*

In San Francisco several saloon-keepers have been tried, but in every case the jury has acquitted or else failed to agree. Last week, however, a prominent hatter was convicted and sentenced to pay a fine of ten dollars. This would indicate that the enlightened jurors of San Francisco think selling hats on Sunday worse than selling whisky. People may get along with old hats or go without, but whisky is regarded as a necessity. These three cases, with one in Sacramento, are the only convictions of which we have any knowledge at present. *SITI April 27, 1882, page 199.3*

After a trial in a Police Court in San Francisco, last Friday, in which the jury disagreed, the Judge informed the Prosecuting Attorney that if a conviction did not follow the second trial of the case, on the 10th of May, he would dismiss all the Sunday Law cases now on the docket of the court. And this is, we think, an index of the feeling of most of the officials. They are opposed to the law at heart, do not think that convictions can be obtained, and desire to be rid of the insurmountable amount of work before them. *SITI April 27, 1882, page 199.4*

The League of Freedom is rejoicing somewhat over what looks like an evidence of weakening on the part of the Home Protection. The President of the San Francisco League claims that he was approached by a prominent member of the Home Protection Society with the statement that the latter society would withdraw all complaints for a consideration. He refused the offer on the ground that the League of Freedom had no fears as to the result. He offered to meet the Executive Committee of the Home Protection Society and give full proofs of his statements, with the name of the individual who made the offer. The Protectionists refused to meet him, but said that he could make his statement through the papers, which he refused to do. Thus the matter stands. Each society professes to feel confident that it will accomplish its purpose.*SITI April 27, 1882, page 199.5*

A large mass-meeting was recently held in Sacramento, and several resolutions were presented, among which was the following:-*SITI April 27, 1882, page 199.6*

Resolved. That in the approaching political campaign we will support no candidate for the Legislature who is pledged to the repeal of the Sunday Law of California.*SITI April 27, 1882, page 199.7*

Rev. Mr. Hansen, in speaking of these resolutions, said he hoped they would be acted on by a rising vote. He said the friends of the law meant business, and the politicians were going to have a lively time on this question, and the men who want to have a foothold in the future had better look to it where they step now. The friends of the law had resolved to "fight fire with fire, and blood with blood, and money with money." His remarks were loudly applauded. When the vote was taken, the entire audience, with few exceptions, rose in the affirmative, and none in the negative. A committee of some of the leading citizens was appointed to wait on the Mayor to request that the best efforts of the authorities be employed to enforce the Sunday Law. In this connection it is well to note that at a meeting of the Licensed Dealers' Association, a few evenings before, it was resolved to make politics secondary in the next election, and to support no man who would not promise to vote for a repeal of the Sunday Law. Also the Democratic convention in San Francisco

adopted an anti-Sunday resolution at a recent meeting.*SITI April 27, 1882, page 199.8*

From these statements our readers can get a pretty fair idea of the present status of the Sunday cause in California. Whether the law is repealed at the next session of the Legislature or not, the matter will not end there. The advocates of Sunday observance are too numerous and too determined to let the matter drop; and those who have set themselves to actively oppose the law will not submit without a struggle. As has been stated before, the principal result of the present agitation in California will doubtless be to stimulate those in the East who are working for a Religious Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, to make more decided efforts than ever before.*SITI April 27, 1882, page 199.9*

It may not be amiss to state for the benefit of some who still seem to misunderstand our position, that Seventh-day Adventists take no sides in this controversy. We have no part in it whatever. We say "God speed" to every effort to prohibit the liquor traffic, but cannot join a purely Sunday movement. In this and coming time, it is ours simply to watch the fulfillment of prophecy that we may not be taken unawares, and to "fear God, and keep his commandments," for this, and nothing less, is our "whole duty." E. J. W.*SITI April 27, 1882, page 199.10*

June 8, 1882

“Miracles—Do They Now Exist?” *The Signs of the Times*, 8, 22.

E. J. Waggoner

Of late, this question has occupied quite a prominent place in religious journals, but none of them have disposed of it in so few words as the *Christian at Work*. We give its remarks on the subject, together with the question which called them out:—*SITI June 8, 1882, page 259.1*

“If the age of miracles is not passed, can the sick still be healed by faith and prayer? And are such cures now wrought? If miracles are not to be looked for, how are the remarkable cases of sudden healing, called ‘faith cures,’ to be accounted for? or are they not cases of sudden healing?”—*Watch-Tower.SITI June 8, 1882, page 259.2*

“The age of miracles is past; the modern ‘faith cures’ can all be explained by Psychology, just as bread pills have effected like wonderful cures. Miracles are something more than preternatural events,—they are supernatural occurrences sent to authenticate the divine character of a messenger. *That* is the touchstone of every miracle related between the covers of the Bible.”*SITI June 8, 1882, page 259.3*

When any question is thus arbitrarily answered, it is an evidence either that it has been so thoroughly canvassed previously that the answer is self-evident, or else that the one who answers the question has no argument except his dogmatic assertion. We think it can be shown that the latter is true in this instance.*SITI June 8, 1882, page 259.4*

It is a sad fact that the answer given above voices the sentiment of a large portion of the religious world of to-day. A sad fact, because it is only the stepping-stone to a disbelief in the inspiration of the Bible, and the divinity of Christ. The rank infidel claims, with equal reason, that such things as miracles never existed. Indeed, if we deny that miraculous cures may be effected now, we virtually do

deny that they were ever performed. No one now living ever saw any of the miracles that are recorded in the Bible. We accept them on the authority of that book. The Bible has ample evidence in itself that it is an inspired book, and we are bound to accept its statements as the truth. We therefore believe that miracles were really performed by Christ, and by the apostles and prophets. But the same book upon which we rely for our information in regard to miracles in the past, assures us that they will occur. See *Mark 16:17, 18; James 5:14, 15*. Why should we accept the statement of the Bible in one place, and disbelieve it in another?*SITI June 8, 1882, page 259.5*

“Miracles,” it is said, “are supernatural occurrences sent to authenticate the divine character of a messenger.” But it is well to remember that none of Christ’s miracles *seem* to have been performed for this purpose. There is nothing forced or unnatural about them. There was always a want to be supplied, some distress to be relieved. All of Christ’s miracles of healing were done as though they were the natural service of one who sees suffering, and puts forth his power to alleviate it. The idea of the pity and compassion of Christ is the most prominent in all his miracles. It is true that these miracles attested his divinity, and constrained the people to say “That God hath visited his people,” yet nowhere does the humanity of Christ appear more plainly than in his contact with the afflicted. At the tomb of Lazarus he wept; he had compassion on the widow of Nain, and on the multitudes who were ready to perish through hunger and fatigue. He “went about doing good,” not with parade and ceremony, as though to call attention to himself, but as one whose compassionate nature was touched by the sight of pain. Now we cannot believe that Jesus is any less tender and compassionate now than when he was on earth. Although we cannot see him with our eyes, he is as truly present, “beholding the evil and the good,” as when he walked with man; we read that he is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities,” and that he cares for us. We might reasonably expect, then, that his power would at times be put forth to help his creatures, even if we had not been assured that such would be the case.*SITI June 8, 1882, page 259.6*

But what is a miracle? It is simply a wonder, a wonderful thing. Then the fact that man, frail as he is, exists at all, is a standing

miracle. David praised God because he was “fearfully and wonderfully made,” and Jeremiah felt that “it is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.” No one could, by his own power, keep himself alive for a single moment. No man can create even the tiniest blade of grass, although he may know the elements which compose it, nor can he understand how it could be made to grow. The whole creation is a constant proof of the power of God continually exerted. Why, then, should we limit his power? If God is constantly performing miracles of one kind, why may he not perform others?*SITI June 8, 1882, page 260.1*

But there is still another point to consider. In *Psalms 103:2, 3*, we read: “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases.” Here we have the forgiveness of sins, and the healing of diseases placed together, as two things for which to be thankful. Whoever will seriously consider the terrible condition of man in a fallen state, cannot but be convinced that the work of man’s redemption, the plan by which his sins may be constantly forgiven, is one of the greatest miracles that can be conceived. Now that Christ forgives sins, no Christian can deny. This is the good news which the gospel brings to man. If this were not true, the gospel would cease to be a gospel. But the psalmist carries the idea that the healing of diseases belongs to God as well as the forgiveness of sins, and it must be that he does heal diseases, or there would be no occasion for thanking him for it. And there is no intimation that the work of healing diseases should cease before the work of forgiving sins ceased.*SITI June 8, 1882, page 260.2*

If we study the New Testament, we shall find this fact still more clearly taught. Read the plain testimony in *James 5:14, 15*: “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith *shall save the sick*, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.” There is no guess-work about this. It is a simple declaration of what *shall be* if certain conditions are complied with. It is very common to ignore this passage, or explain it away, claiming that it does not mean exactly what it says. But if we so dispose of the first part, we

must treat the second in like manner, and claim that sins are not actually forgiven. Both statements are equally emphatic. There are many who can testify to the fact that God does forgive sins; and witnesses of his healing power are not few. Those who are disposed to cavil, will say that God does not heal all the diseases even of those who profess that their sins have been forgiven, for if he did, none would die. To this we can answer that man is not promised immunity from death. "It is appointed unto men once to die," and this without reference to whether they are good or bad. Immortality is conferred upon God's people only at the resurrection. See *1 Corinthians 15:51-54*. But the fact remains that men are healed by the power of God, when human power utterly fails. It is God that keeps us alive, and it is he that heals all diseases. As before quoted, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed." *SITI June 8, 1882, page 260.3*

But there is still stronger evidence that the healing of diseases and the forgiveness of sins are co-existent, and it is given by our Lord himself. Read the account of the healing of the man sick of the palsy, as recorded in *Matthew 9:1-8*, also in *Mark 3:1-12*, and *Luke 5:18-26*. When Jesus saw the faith of the sick man and his attendants, he said to him: "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house." Here we have the power to heal the sick given as an evidence of the power to forgive sins. "Whether is easier?" Both are entirely beyond the comprehension of man. Sin is disease of the soul, as sickness is of the body. Sickness and death are but the result of sin (*Romans 5:12*), and God alone can save from both. In the future state, when all sin is forever done away, we are told that "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain;" and it is said that the inhabitant of that country shall not say "I am sick." Now since God, in his infinite mercy, is pleased to forgive us our sins, if we but comply with the conditions, and give us, even here, foretastes of the

heavenly glory, is it not reasonable that he should at times relieve the pain which his followers suffer? Add to this the many plain declarations in the Bible, and who can doubt it? That there are many pretended cures, and many that are simply imaginary, cannot be denied, but to say that all “faith cures” are such, is to play into the hands of infidels.*SITI June 8, 1882, page 260.4*

The Bible itself is the best evidence that it is the word of God, because it is always consistent with itself. The different parts have so close a relation that they cannot be separated. The man who begins to doubt any portion of it, is in danger of disbelieving the whole. If we let one point go, and hold to our unbelief, the rest must surely follow. There are many things in the word of God that are “hard to be understood,” and we cannot hope to know how God can perform his works; but it is foolish and wicked to reject and deny all that we cannot understand. Rather let us say with the psalmist: “Thy word is true from the beginning; and everyone of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.” E. J. W.*SITI June 8, 1882, page 260.5*

July 13, 1882

“The Intercession of Christ” The Signs of the Times, 8, 26.

E. J. Waggoner

A brother residing in the eastern part of the State, writes concerning a man in that place, professedly a Seventh-day Adventist, who has been making known some of his peculiar views. He thinks that this people are all right except wherein they differ with him. He has, he says, talked with several of our leading ministers, but has received no satisfaction. The brother writes in behalf of the church in that place, that they may know what credence to give to this man's theory. The theory in question, as given to us, is this:-*SITI July 13, 1882, page 308.1*

“He thinks that the death of Christ was all that is necessary on Christ's part to secure man's redemption. No necessity for intercession in Heaven. That it belittles the character of God to suppose that he could be influenced to change his decision by the intercession of Christ. If a man has lived conscientiously in this life, God, who made him and can measure his motives, and sympathize with his weakness, will render unto him his just deserts anyway; and consequently Christ's intercession becomes at least a very puerile and unnecessary thing..... He goes not believe that God can be angry in any degree, for that element would be contrary to the attributes of his nature. ‘Anger resteth in the bosom of fools.’”*SITI July 13, 1882, page 308.2*

We have here an example of the way some men will get an idea from a single text of Scripture, and then, mounting their hobby, will fly off regardless of a thousand other texts on the same subject. It has been well said that the peculiarity of the hobby horse is that when a man is once astride of it he cannot get off; and this is doubtless the reason why the man failed to receive any satisfaction from those ministers with whom he talked. If only the single individual were concerned, there would generally be but little use to try to answer him; but unfortunately the carrying capacity of a hobby is unlimited, and the rider is always anxious to share his seat with his friends.*SITI July 13, 1882, page 308.3*

In the first place, if we can believe the Bible, "God is angry with the wicked every day." *Psalms 7:11*. He himself says, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments." *Exodus 20:5, 6*. In many places in the Old Testament we read of his anger being kindled against the Israelites, and threatenings of anger if they should disobey him. David says, "He will not always chide; neither will he keep his anger forever." *Psalms 103:9*. *SITI July 13, 1882, page 308.4*

Jeremiah, speaking in prophetic vision, says, "I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger." *Jeremiah 4:26*. Again, "Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched." *Jeremiah 7:20*. "Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. The anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly." *Chap. 23:19, 20*. Read also *Jeremiah 25:15-38*. Nahum says: "Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger?" *Chap. 1:6*. Again we read: "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wateness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, ... And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord.... Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land." *Zephaniah 1:14-18*. And then the exhortation is given: "Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." *Chap. 2:3*. See also *Chap. 3:8*. *SITI July 13, 1882, page 308.5*

We believe that God understands his own attributes better than any man; and it will not do to presume upon the mercy of God, when he plainly says that his anger will be poured out on those who persist in their rebellion against him. Finite man cannot judge an infinite God. The threatenings contained in the Bible should serve to make man “tremble at his word.” Paul says, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.” *2 Corinthians 5:11*. *SITI July 13, 1882, page 308.6*

But the objector quotes: “Anger resteth in the bosom of fools.” Very true. It remains there, constantly springing into activity at every provocation, or no provocation at all. He harbors it in his heart, and cherishes it. But David says of the Lord: “For his anger endureth but a moment.” *Psalms 30:5*. The Lord, speaking through the prophet Isaiah, of the punishment of the wicked, says: “For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction.” *Isaiah 10:25*. To compare the petty anger and malice which dwells in the human heart, and which so many glory in, with the just indignation of a long-offended God, is irreverent, to say the least. *SITI July 13, 1882, page 308.7*

The idea that Christ does not intercede for man is of the same nature. It is a plain contradiction of the Bible. However confident others may be of their power to stand and plead their own case before God, we are glad for the promise that “if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” *1 John 2:1*. Read also the following: “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” *1 Timothy 2:5*. “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” *Hebrews 9:24*. “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” *Romans 8:34*. “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” *Hebrews 7:25*. These texts plainly teach that man has an advocate; that that advocate is Christ; and that he is now making intercession for us. To call his intercession puerile and unnecessary is simply blasphemy. Let such a one read and consider *Hebrews 10:28, 29*. *SITI July 13, 1882,*

The fact that a man is represented at court by an advocate does not prove that the judge is unjust, or disinclined to listen to the man's case; but it does prove that the man is unable to properly present his own case. There is nothing in man that would recommend him to God, for he has forfeited all claim upon his mercy. God cannot look upon sin with any allowance. It is exceedingly repugnant to him. When man was pure and innocent he could talk face to face with God; but when he fell, God hid his face from him. A just God could not endure a sinful being in his presence, even to beg for mercy. Therefore we now have to come to God through the intercession of Christ. Christ says: "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." *John 14:6*. Christ is the sinner's only hope. *SITI July 13, 1882, page 308.9*

If a man were in danger of drowning and a rope were thrown to him, he would not stop to criticize the rope, or the man who threw it. If he were wise he would seize it at once. He would not cavil, and wonder why those seeking to save him did not use some other means; nor would he hesitate, for fear that the rope would not hold him; neither would he, unless he were blind, say that no rope had been thrown; nor, unless he were insane or hopelessly conceited, would he assert that he could climb into the ship without the aid of any rope. Should he do any of these things, the tide would carry the rope beyond his reach, and he would be left to drown. So the one who carps at the plan which God has chosen by which to save men, is in danger of losing the benefit of the offer which is held out to him. Perhaps God might have devised some other means of salvation, if it had pleased him to do so, but since he did not, it ill becomes us to question his wisdom. *SITI July 13, 1882, page 308.10*

To those whose ears are assailed with such false theories we would quote the language of Paul: "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace." In other words: Beware of the man with a hobby. E. J. W. *SITI July 13, 1882, page 308.11*

September 14, 1882

“‘Occupy Till I Come’” *The Signs of the Times*, 8, 35.

E. J. Waggoner

It is the especial work of scoffers to point out the inconsistencies of professors of religion. Although this custom is by no means a benefit to the fault-finder, it is not on the whole a very bad thing for the church, as it operates to some extent as a church. And it is well for professed Christians to heed criticisms of non-professors, for the latter are usually very good judges of what constitutes Christianity, by standing self-condemned. *SITI September 14, 1882, page 416.1*

There is perhaps no body of Christians that is a target for more criticism, both just and unjust, as Seventh-day Adventists. The reason for this is plain. They lay more stress on the commandments of God than almost any other people, and teach as a fundamental doctrine of their faith that the coming of the Lord is very near. The world recognizes the truth of John's statement, that "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure." ¹ *John 3:3*. Inconsistencies in a people holding such a high profession cannot fail to be noted. *SITI September 14, 1882, page 416.2*

But there is one charge brought against Seventh-day Adventists that is not well founded. It is something like this: "You profess to believe that the Lord will come very soon—in a few years; that men now living will see him. And yet you show the greatest activity in erecting publishing houses, and in building and equipping colleges for the thorough education of children. If what you profess to believe is really true, then the Lord will come before many of these children are old enough to use their education. Where, then, is the consistency?" It is not skeptics alone who talk thus, but honest, worthy brethren are sometimes troubled over the matter. Such persons do not fully understand the spirit of the Lord. We think it can be easily shown that the more we exhibit in every laudable undertaking, the more nearly do we fulfill the commands of our Saviour. *SITI September 14, 1882, page 416.3*

The two parables of our Lord, one in *25th of Matthew* and the other

in *19th of Luke*, fully set forth the duty of the Christian while waiting for the return of Christ. Christ is represented as a nobleman going into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. He called his servants and delivered unto them his goods. We are not to suppose that this refers to any one particular thing, but that it embraces everything with which we are endowed. There are various kinds of talents. They comprise intellect, health, strength, influence, ability to gain property, etc.; everything the possession of which is counted as a benefit to mankind. Some have more than others. To everyone is given “according to his several ability.” The parable in Luke represents each one as receiving the same amount. This may represent the truth of God, which is given to all. There are some who have not health and strength; some have not the faculty that others have to acquire property; and there are varying degrees of intellectual strength; but to all the word of God is given, and his Spirit is free to the poorest and weakest who will ask in faith. All temporal and spiritual blessings which we receive are the talents which God has bestowed upon us. *SITI September 14, 1882, page 416.4*

Now to the servants it is said, “*Occupy* till I come.” The word “occupy” does not mean possession merely. It does not mean that each individual should simply hold that which is committed to him. It means this and more. It has the sense of trading, negotiating, and doing business, of increasing by use. We may learn this from the sequel. Those whose talents had increased on their hands, who had added to that which they had received, were praised and rewarded by their lord when he returned. But there was one who had simply that which had been given him. Some of it was missing; it had been carefully preserved, but it had been allowed to lie idle. To this one it was said, “Thou wicked and slothful servant;” and he was rebuked for not putting the talent to the exchangers so that his lord could have received is own with increase. *SITI September 14, 1882, page 416.5*

From this we learn that God expects us to constantly improve all our gifts, however small, always, of course, to his glory. If we have property, we are to remember that it is God that gives us power to get wealth. *Deuteronomy 8:18*. Whatever strength we may possess, we must remember that we are to glorify God in our bodies. God

has endowed us all with reasoning faculties, and he expects us to use them. If our talents do not increase, then we are of no more value than the beasts, for they answer the end of their existence. And it is not enough that we gain something, but we must gain all that is possible. *SITI September 14, 1882, page 416.6*

And then again we have the command, “Occupy *till I come*.” We are to be active in using the talents which God has given us, till the coming of Christ. It is he that endureth unto the end that shall be saved. But if we quit working before the end comes, how can it be said that we have endured unto the end? The idea that activity in our every-day work is incompatible with true godliness is a remnant of the popish custom of going into utter seclusion in order to serve God fully. Daniel was a most upright and godly man, and yet he was prime minister of a vast empire, and had all the affairs of State on his hands. *SITI September 14, 1882, page 416.7*

The wise man says, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.” In this we glorify God. Of course it is understood that we are to consider all we gain, whatever it may be, as, belonging to God. And when we are engaged directly in the work of God, or in fitting ourselves for a place in that work, we have special need of diligence. God desires all who would work for him to have the necessary preparation. And if we are diligent in this preparation, it matters not if the Master comes before it is completed. If we have been obeying orders, -doing his will- it is well. Activity in the work that is given us is not inconsistent with a belief in the near coming of our Lord, but idleness and negligence are inconsistent with such belief. Whatever our position, whether it is ours to labor with our hands, to study, to teach, to preach, or whether we are waiting further orders, let us be faithful in the discharge of our duty. “Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.” E. J. W. *SITI September 14, 1882, page 416.8*

October 5, 1882

“Is It a Sin?” *The Signs of the Times*, 8, 38.

E. J. Waggoner

A few days ago one of our brethren distributed some copies of the “Special Edition” on the local train in Oakland. Pretty soon a gentleman who had been reading a copy came and sat down beside the brother, and said, “Don’t you think you would be doing a good deal more good if you wrote and preached against sin, instead of saying so much about the Sabbath?” *SITI October 5, 1882, page 452.1*

The idea expressed in this question is one that obtains quite generally. To be sure, there are many who teach that Sabbath-breaking is a sin; but the Sabbath whose observance they would enjoin is a counterfeit Sabbath, and not the true Sabbath of the Bible. But it is true that even among those who believe that Sunday is the Sabbath, there is a great deal of indifference as to the manner in which it is observed. *SITI October 5, 1882, page 452.2*

In order to ascertain whether Sabbath-breaking is a sin or not, we must first determine definitely what sin is. There are certain things which few would hesitate to call sin, but we want a general rule that will cover all cases; a standard that will enable us to tell at once if a certain action is wrong, so that we may not be left to conjecture. Fortunately, we have just such a rule—one that is given by the pen of inspiration. We find it in *1 John 3:4*: “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law.” Paul makes the same statement in another form: “For where no law is, there is no transgression.” *Romans 4:15*: and, “Sin is not imputed where there is no law.” *Romans 5:13*. And this fact is universally recognized. You cannot convince any man that he is doing wrong unless you first show him a law that he is violating. And whenever a man does anything, knowing that that act has been forbidden by some power having the right to enact law, he stands self-condemned. *SITI October 5, 1882, page 452.3*

Solomon tells us that to fear God and keep his commandments is

the whole duty of man. Then it must necessarily follow that the law to which John and Paul refer, the transgression of which is sin, is none other than the law of God-the ten commandments. A few texts will suffice to show the importance of observing that law. As above quoted, it comprises man's whole duty. *Ecclesiastes 12:13*. It is "perfect, converting the soul." *Psalms 19:7*. The keeping of the law is the test of our love to God. *1 John 5:3*. It is only by keeping it, in connection with faith in Christ, that we are to inherit eternal life in the kingdom of God. *Matthew 19:17; Revelation 22:14*. On the other hand, we are told that "he that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." *Proverbs 28:9*. Surely no worse fate could befall any man than that God should turn with loathing from his entreaty. And we learn that a partial obedience to the law will not suffice to bring the promised reward, or avert the penalty, for partial obedience is disobedience. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." *James 2:10*. It could not be otherwise; for since God is the author of the whole law, we dishonor him if we do not render obedience to the whole law. If we willfully refuse to keep one of the commandments, we show that we do not keep the other nine out of any special regard to the Lawgiver, but because it is convenient or for our self-interest to do so. We do, therefore, really dishonor God by violating one of his commandments as truly as though we violated them all. *SITI October 5, 1882, page 452.4*

Turning to consider this law, upon the observance of which our eternal destiny depends, we find that the Sabbath commandment is the most honored of them all. The fourth commandment is the one chosen to make known to men who the maker of the law is. It is true that three other commandments contain the word "God," but there is nothing in them to designate who is referred to. "There be gods many and lords many, but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things." *1 Corinthians 8:5, 6*. The fourth commandment expressly declares that this only true God, the Creator of heaven and earth, is its author. *SITI October 5, 1882, page 452.5*

This law is almost universally recognized as the embodiment of all morality, the summary of all law; and the open violation of nearly all of them, especially the first three, and the sixth, seventh, eighth,

and ninth, is considered a flagrant sin. The violation of the fifth and tenth is also theoretically considered a sin, although practically those two commandments are little regarded. But whether men regard the commandments in their lives or not, in theory they are generally ready to admit that they are all binding, with the exception of the fourth. The only reason of which we can think why men should thus lightly regard the fourth commandment, is that its violation is so common. Indeed, the custom of the people is often urged with all seriousness as a sufficient reason for not keeping the Sabbath. The Sabbath commandment is the only one concerning which men argue thus. They do not argue that God will not punish the thief because there are so many who steal; or that false swearing is now pleasing to God because it is so common. But in regard to the fourth commandment, they seem to imagine that they can overawe God with numbers, and convert him to their way of thinking. But sin is sin, whether practiced by few or many. Men become accustomed to sin, so that its heinousness is lessened in their estimation; but it is not so with God. The multiplication of sin only serves to make it more offensive to him. In this age of the world, human life is held very cheap, and murders are so frequent that we read of the worst crimes with scarcely a second thought; but we are not to suppose that God is less moved by a murder now than when Cain killed his brother. The fact that a multitude join together to commit any sin, does not recommend it to him. He says, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil;" and he has expressly declared that "though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished." *SITI October 5, 1882, page 452.6*

Who can tell which commandment God regards as the most sacred? It is beyond the power of man. When Christ was asked, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" he did not specify any one, but quoted the two great principles which cover the whole law. We have no assurance that God regards Sabbath-breaking as any less a sin than theft or murder. From the place which he has given the fourth commandment in his law, as the one to show the badge of his authority, his creative power, it would seem that if any distinction were made, Sabbath-breaking would be considered as the greatest of sins. But even if we were able to discriminate between the commandments, and say that one is greater than another, it would not release us from keeping the least

commandment; for Christ says, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least [*i.e.*, of no account] in the kingdom of heaven." *Matthew 5:19*. Following the verse in which James says that to offend in one point makes a man guilty of all, we read: "For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." *James 2:11*. The fourth commandment may be supplied in place of the sixth, and we would then read, For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou break the Sabbath, thou art become a transgressor of the law. The same may be said of any other precept of the decalogue. *SITI October 5, 1882, page 452.7*

Sabbath-breaking, then, is a sin, and those who would be preachers of righteousness must give the Sabbath its proper place in the law of God. We do not teach Sabbath observance to the exclusion of the other commandments, but we exhort men to obey all the law, for that is the standard by which "God shall bring every work into judgment." "And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before God, as he hath commanded us." *Deuteronomy 6:25*. E. J. W. *SITI October 5, 1882, page 452.8*

October 19, 1882

“The Fruit of the Spirit” The Signs of the Times, 8, 39.

E. J. Waggoner

If we compare the fruit of the Spirit with the result obtained by following the teachings of the Bible, we shall find that they are identical. Paul says that all Scripture is “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” *2 Timothy 3:16, 17*. So if a man will profit by the reproofs and instruction found in the word of God, he will be perfect, lacking in no good thing. But a man cannot be more than perfect, and anything different from perfection is imperfection. The fact that any belief or practice is not indorsed or sanctioned by the Bible, is sufficient to condemn it. If it is not found in the Bible, it is not a part of the outfit necessary to make a man perfect. *SITI October 19, 1882, page 463.1*

In *Galatians 5:22, 23* we read, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” These fruits of the Spirit are the results which come from following the guidance of the Spirit. We will examine them in detail, and see if they differ in any particular from the word of God. *SITI October 19, 1882, page 463.2*

The first thing mentioned is love. Very many persons entirely mistake the Bible meaning of love. With many it consists in a sort of good feeling, an indefinable condition, the principal feature of which is that the person feels happy and extremely well satisfied with himself. But the kind of love that the Bible brings to view does not depend solely on the emotions, but is very practical. John says, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.” *1 John 5:3*. Again, “And this is love, that we walk after His commandments.” The keeping of the commandments is the test of love. Paul says, “Love is the fulfilling of the law.” Who ever heard of a law being fulfilled by its violation? Some persons think that they have so much love to God that he will accept it as a substitute for keeping the law; but we here learn that

love is the keeping of the commandments. How a person can love God, and refuse to keep all his commandments, is a mystery that no one has ever been able to explain. Those who make such a profession lay themselves liable to the charge in *1 John 2:4*.SITI October 19, 1882, page 463.3

We see, then, that the result of following the Holy Spirit is to keep the commandments. But this is the whole duty of man. *Ecclesiastes 12:13*. And we shall find that while love is the keeping of the commandments, all the other things mentioned by Paul in *Galatians 5:22, 23*, as the fruit of the Spirit, are the natural results of keeping the commandments. Joy and peace are mentioned next; and they attend the keeping of the law. The psalmist says, "Great peace have they which love thy law." *Psalms 119:165*. Again we read, "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." *Isaiah 48:18*. Here, too, the Spirit and the word agree.SITI October 19, 1882, page 463.4

Long-suffering and gentleness are given as part of the fruit of the Spirit. Paul says, in *1 Corinthians 13:4*, that charity (love), which we have seen is simply the keeping of the law, "suffereth long, and is kind." He also says that it "vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up;" and as we have seen, meekness is a part of the fruit of the Spirit. Goodness is also part of the fruit of the Spirit; and Paul tells us that love "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."SITI October 19, 1882, page 463.5

Again we read that "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." *2 Corinthians 3:17*. But James says that the law of God is a "law of liberty." *James 1:25; 2:12*. And David says that those are at liberty who keep the law. *Psalms 119:45*. Here, again, we see perfect harmony. Again Paul says, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." *Romans 8:14*. John tells us that those whom God in his great love calls his sons, and who have a hope to see him as he is, purify themselves. *1 John 3:1-3*. And Peter completes the chain of testimony by saying, "Seeing ye have purified our souls in obeying the truth," and he adds that this purifying is done "through the Spirit." *1 Peter 1:22*.SITI October 19, 1882, page 463.6

But it is not necessary to multiply proofs. That there can be no inharmony between God's word and his Spirit is so self-evident that no one who professes to be a Christian should presume to question it. Indeed, the Bible is the work of the Holy Spirit itself. We read, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." *2 Peter 1:21*. May the Lord help us humbly to follow the leadings of the Spirit, that we may be guided "into all truth" (*John 17:17*), and finally share the promise of our Father to "see him as he is." E. J. W. *SITI*
October 19, 1882, page 463.7

November 2, 1882

“Why Not?” The Signs of the Times, 8, 41.

E. J. Waggoner

We are constantly told by the adherents to Sunday observance that the main idea of the fourth commandment is rest; that the particular day on which men should rest is of minor importance; that the Lord saw that rest would be a necessity to mankind, and wisely provided for it, but left it for men to determine which day would best suit their convenience. People can worship God just as well on Sunday as on Saturday; and since this is so, it is evident that the day which is most convenient for the majority, is the day which the Lord intended should be kept.*SITI November 2, 1882, page 488.1*

Thus they argue. Now for a practical application. The President of the United States has appointed Thursday, November 30, as a day of public thanksgiving and prayer. Any individual can plainly see by reading the proclamation, that the greatest stress is laid on the giving of thanks, and that but very little is said in regard to the day on which thanksgiving services should be held. If people are only properly thankful it can certainly make no difference to the President on what day they express their thanks, since there is nothing in the day itself.*SITI November 2, 1882, page 488.2*

Now, it is a fact that to stop work, and shut up stores on Thursday, Nov. 30, as many good people will feel under obligation to do, will be a great inconvenience. Not only will it be an inconvenience to those who thus rest, but it will seriously interfere with the business of many who do not intend to pay any attention to the President's proclamation. And since the giving of thanks, and not the observance of any specified day, is the real point of the proclamation, it is evident that its requirements will be fully met if the people meet in their respective churches on Sunday, December 3. That day will be the most convenient for the great majority of the people, and hence it seems clear that the President really designed that the thanksgiving services should take place on that day.*SITI November 2, 1882, page 488.3*

And further, there may be some eccentric people who will imagine that the President really meant what he said, and will keep the identical day mentioned in the proclamation, thus showing that they are bound by the form, and cannot grasp the spirit of the proclamation. But since such fanatical persons will form only a small minority of the inhabitants of any State, it will be highly proper, and absolutely necessary, that the majority should pass a law compelling all to keep thanksgiving on the third day of December. This will insure uniformity. *SITI November 2, 1882, page 488.4*

It is true that uniformity of practice might be gained by all uniting to celebrate the day which the President appointed, but since, on account of the inconvenience, all will not do this, it is manifestly better to choose some day upon which nearly all can agree, than to have many people observing no day of thanksgiving whatever. *SITI November 2, 1882, page 488.5*

And now we ask our Sunday friends if such a course would be obeying the President's proclamation. Would it be showing proper respect to the Chief Magistrate of the United States? Would it not be putting the will of the governed above that of the ruler? No one will hesitate to say that such a course would be, to say the least, highly disrespectful. And now the question arises, Is not the great Jehovah, the creator of the universe, entitled to be treated with as much respect as the President of the United States? If not, why not? E. J. W. *SITI November 2, 1882, page 488.6*

November 9, 1882

“Death or Translation?” *The Signs of the Times*, 8, 42.

E. J. Waggoner

One of Oakland’s most prominent D.D.’s., when announcing the death of the Rev. Thomas Guard, spoke highly of his many good qualities, and said, “Death to such a man is translation.” The thought at once arose, “According to your theory of the condition of man after death, is it any special favor to a man to be translated?” Let us see. The Doctor holds, of course, in common with all so-called orthodox believers, that all men are essentially immortal, and that none cease to exist even when they are said to die; that the wicked go at once to their punishment, and that the good at once enter into a state of never-ending bliss. Now if this were really true, of what benefit would it be to any man to be translated? What better off would one be who was translated, than one would be who had died, except that he might have escaped some of the suffering incident to dissolution? It does not appear that he would gain anything. *SITI November 9, 1882, page 499.1*

But in the case under consideration the man had actually died, yet the preacher said that his death was equal to translation. The idea conveyed to the mind of the hearer was that since the man had been an unusually good man, he was, according to the preacher’s idea, granted a favor not allowed to ordinary people. If the preacher had been a Catholic, the thing would have been plain enough. Then we would have said, “He means that the man was so pure that he was permitted to enter Heaven at once, without stopping in purgatory to expiate some unconfessed sin. But he was not a Catholic, and so we set the expression down as an instance of the impossibility of accurately describing an erroneous doctrine with the language of Scripture. *SITI November 9, 1882, page 499.2*

One thing was plain, however, and that was that even to the darkened spiritual understanding of the speaker, the word “translation” expresses something different from what most people finally pass through; something better than death. The Bible alone shows us how it is better and more to be desired. *SITI November 9,*

The fifth chapter of Genesis contains nearly all that we know of the patriarchs who lived before the flood. The sacred writer has simply given the number of years that they lived, and closes the record of each with the sentence, "And he died." Only once exception is made; of Enoch it is said that "he was not; *for God took him.*" Paul says of him, "By faith Enoch was translated *that he should not see death.*" Now we see that there is a great deal of difference between death and translation, and that translation is to be preferred to death. It was a great favor that was conferred upon holy Enoch. And how was he favored above the other patriarchs? The answer is found in these words: "For God took him." The others all died, but God took Enoch. Noah walked with God, but he died; faithful Abraham was called the friend of God, but he also died. And so the record runs. Only one besides Enoch is said to have been translated. *SITI November 9, 1882, page 499.4*

Now does the Bible mean to convey the idea that Enoch received a special favor in being translated? No one can doubt it. We then ask, "Can the believers in natural immortality tell in what that favor consisted?" If when Enoch arrived in Heaven he found that Adam was already there, by how much was he the gainer? It is clear that in such a case Adam would have been the gainer by fifty-seven years, for he died that long before Enoch was translated. *SITI November 9, 1882, page 499.5*

But there need be no questioning about the matter. If language means anything at all, the record is clear that God did not "take" those of whom it is said that they died. Paul settles the matter when he closes the long list of tried and faithful ones, with the words: "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." *Hebrews 11:29, 30.* With a few exceptions, none of the good of past ages have yet entered upon their reward. There is no precedence in point of time. They do not enter Heaven till we do. And how is it finally to be accomplished? There are but two ways, as we may say, of entering Heaven, and death is not one of them. Both are given by Paul in *1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17*: "For the Lord himself shall

descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord *SITI November 9, 1882, page 499.6*

Resurrection or translation are the alternatives. Those who have died cannot be translated, and those who are to be translated cannot have died. And all are to be glorified together: Noah, Daniel, Job, Paul, or the beloved disciple, will be on a level, so far as the time of reward is concerned, with the weakest saint that lived. But when the last great day shall come-that day to which Paul looked with such anxious longing-when the dead are raised incorruptible, and the living are changed to immortality, all can join in the triumphant shout, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" E. J. W. *SITI November 9, 1882, page 499.7*

November 16, 1882

“A Criminal Theology” *The Signs of the Times*, 8, 43.

E. J. Waggoner

The *American Baptist Flag* recently contained the obituary notice of an infant, to which the following lines were appended:-*SITI November 16, 1882, page 511.1*

“Asleep in Jesus,
Oh so young.
Yet the Lord has said
‘Suffer them to come.’”*SITI November 16, 1882, page 511.2*

We have no disposition to criticize the so-called “poetry,” but to call attention to the implied comment on the well-known words of Christ, “Suffering little children, and forbid them not to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” It has never occurred to us that there could be more than one meaning attached to this verse. In it Christ shows his care for the children, and indicates that even the little ones may believe on him, and he will receive them; that they are nearer the kingdom than any others, for all must become as little children before they can enter therein.*SITI November 16, 1882, page 511.3*

But now a new idea is presented. A little one has died; it is, as the writer says, “asleep in Jesus.” In the popular mind, however, the Bible never means what it says, and when it says that the dead are “asleep,” it is taken for granted that it means that they are alive and more acutely conscious than they ever were on earth. According to this writer, people “come to Jesus,” only when they die.*SITI November 16, 1882, page 511.4*

Paraphrasing *Matthew 19:14* to express the view thus taught, it would read, “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to die,” etc. No one can deny that this is a legitimate rendering, according to popular notions. The idea expressed in the lines quoted is, Do not prevent the children from dying, for Jesus has invited them to come to him, and that is the only way they can get there. And then the

inference might easily be drawn that it would be a pious deed to quietly help them off, or in other words, to kill them. *SITI November 16, 1882, page 511.5*

This is written with no irreverence, except for the false doctrine which makes such an interpretation of Scripture possible. To be sure, natural affection causes the majority of people to take care of the children as much as possible, and there is implanted in the natures of all an instinctive dread of death, which no amount of false teaching about the benefits which death confers can eradicate. Still there are instances where persons of weak minds have been led to destroy their children, in order that they might sooner enter upon the bliss of Heaven. And who that believes as the writer of that obituary notice does, could say that they were not right? Believing that the ten commandments are abolished, and that death "is but the voice which Jesus sends to call departing friends to his arms," why should they hesitate to enter upon a war of extermination, and slay all the righteous? We are glad that people are often more consistent in their practices than in their theories otherwise the scenes of the papal persecution would be outdone by an immolation from love of the victims. *SITI November 16, 1882, page 511.6*

We have no sympathy for a doctrine which makes Herod a benefactor of the race, and gives to Satan the key of Heaven. The word of God is pure, and the one who strictly follows it cannot be guilty of inconsistency either in faith or practice. But error is always inconsistent with itself, and the man who adopts one error, is driven to the acceptance of a hundred more. E. J. W. *SITI November 16, 1882, page 511.7*

November 23, 1882

“Christian Advocate on Sabbath-Keeping” *The Signs of the Times*, 8, 44.

E. J. Waggoner

Our readers will remember that a little more than two years ago the editor of the SIGNS published a series of articles in review of a Sunday book by Dr. Benson. In that review the demerits of the book were plainly shown. At that time, it was stated that the book was not noticed on account of any strength of argument which it contained, but because it was endorsed by the leading men in the Methodist denomination on this coast. The book itself was one of the weakest things ever put into print; its assertions had not enough of the semblance of reason to be dignified by the name of sophistries. The *California Christian Advocate* has been repeatedly called on to defend the obviously untrue statements of that book, together with another Sunday book, or else to cease circulating them; but it has contented itself with an occasional advertisement of the book, and wisely refrained from attempting to substantiate any of its assertions. But at last it has spoken, and here's what it says:-*SITI November 23, 1882, page 523.1*

“Our friend who wishes something on the Sabbath day, will find Dr. Benson's little work very good.”*SITI November 23, 1882, page 523.2*

We do not know that we can seriously dissent from this statement. We must judge of the value of a thing by the use for which it is intended. An instrument that is of no use for one purpose, may be well adapted for another. A plow would be of no account as a vehicle for pleasure riding, but it is a very serviceable farming implement. So Dr. Benson's book is utterly useless for the purpose of showing the truth on the Sabbath question, or converting any one to Sunday observance; but it is as good as is required for satisfying those who are determined to keep Sunday, and want somebody to assure them that they are right. The Sunday side of the Sabbath question does not admit of Bible argument, and, consequently, assertions are all that can be brought to bear in its favor. Dr. Benson's book is profuse with these; therefore, we see no reason

why it is not as good as could be desired. But the *Advocate* proceeds thus:-*SITI November 23, 1882, page 523.3*

“We wish to state two things: 1st. We believe it is impossible to show that in the latitude of Egypt, Sinai, or Palestine, Christians do not keep the original, identical Sabbath day as Moses and Joshua kept it.”*SITI November 23, 1882, page 523.4*

We care very little for what the *Advocate* “believes,” but would very much like to learn something about what it knows. We know and can prove that neither the Christian Sunday of Egypt, Sinai, or Palestine, nor those of any other century, who observe the first day of the week, keep the original, identical Sabbath day as Moses and Joshua what kept it. Will the *Advocate* undertake to prove that they do? It is a very easy way to pass the whole thing by, and say, “We believe it is impossible to show” that certain things are not so, but that does not begin to show that they are so. Moreover, the *Advocate* itself does not believe that the Christians of Egypt, Sinai, or Palestine, who keep the first day of the week, keep the original Sabbath that Moses kept. This can easily be shown. The latitude of these places is also that of California. Then if first-day Christians there keep the original Sabbath that Moses kept, the first-day Christians here must also keep the original Sabbath. The *Advocate*’s statement concedes this. If that is so, what mean the sneers so frequently found in Dr. Benson’s book and in the *Advocate*, against the Seventh-day Adventists for keeping the “Jewish Sabbath”? Moses was a Jew, and if they are keeping the same day that he did, they must be keeping the Jewish Sabbath, and we some other day.*SITI November 23, 1882, page 523.5*

Again, not long since the *Advocate* said in regard to Sunday, “We cannot sustain it before the people, if we claim its sanctity as a religious institution.” In this we think it spoke the truth; but if Sunday be the original Sabbath day as kept by Moses, why cannot it be sustained as a religious institution? It must be the fault of its defenders, for the Bible abounds in evidence as to the sacredness of the original Sabbath day.*SITI November 23, 1882, page 523.6*

Once more, Christians of every latitude and nation, claim to keep the first day of the week in honor of Christ’s resurrection. We agree

with them that Christ rose on the first day of the week; but will they seriously claim that they are keeping the seventh day to commemorate any event that took place on the first? No; they all claim that the Sabbath was changed at that time from the seventh to the first day of the week. But on the day that Jesus lay in the tomb, the day immediately preceding his resurrection, the disciples rested, "according to the commandment." *Luke 23:56*. That was the original Sabbath day as kept by Moses, and was the same day that Seventh-day Adventists keep. We can prove this in the following manner: The Jews, who made no change in their religious practices, but continued to observe the seventh day, observe the same day of the week that we do. Shortly after the resurrection they were scattered abroad, and are now found in every civilized land; but there is no disagreement as to the day of the week. The day that they keep is not the day that is kept by the majority of Christians. The Mohammedans observe Friday, not as a Sabbath, but as a festival day, and in Egypt and Palestine, they celebrate their day the day before the Jews celebrate their Sabbath. And the great body of so-called Christians, comprising the Catholic, Greek, and Protestant churches, unite in the observance of Sunday in honor, as they say, of Christ's resurrection, and there has never been any clashing between them and the Jews or the Mohammedans. *SITI November 23, 1882, page 523.7*

When Sunday-keepers make the claim that they are keeping the original seventh day, they virtually give up the whole argument. For it is equivalent to saying that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, the original seventh day, is the only true Sabbath, and is still binding; and since no one has ever proved that Sunday is the seventh day, and could not if they should try, all can see at once that they are standing on nothing. The assertion is made solely for the purpose of confusing the minds of those who are not well-informed on the subject, and who do not wish to take the trouble to think for themselves. But we will read farther:-*SITI November 23, 1882, page 523.8*

"2nd. To keep one and the same time all over the earth, for worship and rest, is a physical impossibility, and it is not now and never has been, and never can be so kept, and every intelligent man must and does know it. Therefore, God did not intend to make, and did not

make, any law requiring exactly the same time to be kept by all.”*SITI November 23, 1882, page 523.9*

“Who is this that darkeneth counseled by words without knowledge?” Who ever claimed that it was a possibility to keep one and the same time all over the earth? Not Seventh-day Adventists, we can assure him. But that it is possible to keep *the same day* in all parts of the earth, we know that and are assured of. Our knowledge is based upon reason and experience. We know that there are Sabbath-keepers in America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. We know people who have visited each of these countries, and have never met with any difficulty. Wherever they went they were agreed with the inhabitants as to the days of the week. Moreover, we never knew of anyone who found any difficulty. A trip from this country to Europe is as common a thing nowadays as a trip from New York to Chicago, but we never learn that those who go away keeping Sunday come back keeping some other day. Away back in the Dark Ages, before Columbus ventured across the Atlantic Ocean, when men thought that the earth was flat, and dared not go out of sight of land for fear they might never return, there would have been an excuse for people thinking that the same day could not be observed in all parts of the world; but for a person in this enlightened age, who has had the privilege of our common schools, who is old enough to vote, and who even presumes to talk on politics and religion, for such a one to make the above the assertion, is the quintessence of silliness. We are inexpressibly thankful that our religion does not oblige us to make such inane claims in its defense.”*SITI November 23, 1882, page 523.10*

We close with these propositions: God, who in the beginning created the heavens and the earth, made man. His intention was that man’s descendants should inhabit, not one place merely, but the whole of the earth. *Isaiah 45:18; Acts 17:24-26*. He also at the close of his creative work sanctified the seventh day as a rest-day for man. *Genesis 2:2, 3*. That is, he set it apart and made it holy, and commanded men to observe it. He formally repeated this commandment, together with others, on Sinai, twenty-five hundred years after creation. In neither place did he limit its application to any particular people or any particular locality. The other commandments are conceded on all sides to be of universal

obligation. We can see no reason why the Sabbath commandment is not of universal obligation also; for it is nowhere stated that it was to be an exception. Besides, Paul, says that the law, in which this Sabbath commandment is contained, was made “for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine,” etc. *1 Timothy 1:9, 10*. He also says that “the Scripture hath concluded all under sin.” *Galatians 3:22*. There is no spot on this earth where these sins are not committed. By these texts we think we are fully justified in saying that God did intend to make, and did make, a law requiring the same day-the seventh day-to be kept by all, the editor of the *Advocate* among the rest. When the *Advocate* quits dodging the point, and says squarely that God did not make any law requiring the same day to be kept by all, we have a few more propositions for its consideration. E. J. W. *SITI November 23, 1882, page 523.11*

November 30, 1882

“How Readest Thou?” *The Signs of the Times*, 8, 45.

E. J. Waggoner

A correspondent of the *Sabbath Recorder* has asked that paper the question, “What is the difference between Seventh-day Baptists and Seventh-day Adventists?” The *Recorder* states the principal points of difference, but on two points it seems to misapprehend the position Adventists. In this article we will notice one of these points, because it is one which concerns all, and it involves the interpretation of the Scriptures. The *Recorder* says:-*SITI November 30, 1882, page 535.1*

“These different views grow, mainly, out of different means of interpreting the Scriptures. The Adventists interpret everything literally. The Seventh-day Baptists recognize the fact that Scripture language is often ‘highly figure and must be interpreted accordingly.”*SITI November 30, 1882, page 535.2*

As far as the last sentence is concerned, we are one with our Seventh-day Baptist brethren. We know that Scripture language is at times very highly figurative. No sane person who is ever read the Bible could think otherwise. For instance, the twelfth chapter of Revelation is plainly figurative. No one can suppose that that chapter is an account of a literal woman being pursued by a literal dragon, or that any literal dragon withdrew literal stars from Heaven with his tail. But by reference to the book of Daniel we learn that beasts are used to represent earthly governments, *Daniel 7:17; 8:20, 21*; and when we come to the thirteenth of Revelation and find that the dragon gave to a certain beast his “power, and his seat, and great authority,” *Revelation 13:2*, we cannot do otherwise than conclude that this dragon is also used to represent an earthly government. So also with the beast. We do not believe that a literal beast had a mouth speaking great things, and opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, or that any wild animal would pursue the saints of God in preference to sinners. These things plainly show that this beast represents a blasphemous, persecuting, earthly power.*SITI November 30, 1882, page 535.3*

Such instances of figurative language might be given infinitely, but these are sufficient to show that Seventh-day Adventists recognize the fact that the Bible does contain figurative of language. A more important consideration is, by what rule to interpret the Bible. This is not so difficult a matter as most people suppose. There is not a book of any importance in the English language, or in any other, that does not contain figures. There is not an individual who does not use figures in his daily conversation. Yet we have no difficulty in understanding them. Now we think that the Bible has the advantage of all the books in its use of figures, and for this reason: It is the language of inspiration, and, consequently, there is harmony throughout; its figures are never confused; but men are liable to change and often use figures entirely inappropriate. The Bible, then, may be understood as well as any other book. No one who believes that it is a revelation from God to man can doubt this; for it would be folly to give a communication that could not be understood. If it could not be understood, it would not be a revelation. The following simple rules of interpretation will guide to a correct understanding of the Scriptures:-*SITI November 30, 1882, page 535.4*

1. Accept a statement as literal, unless it is plainly figurative. If there is any absurdities in the statement when interpreted literally, or if it would not harmonize with other parts of Scripture, then it must be a figure.*SITI November 30, 1882, page 536.1*

2. Figures that are in common use must be interpreted as they would be in any other book; give them their most obvious meaning. Any word in the Bible has the same meaning that it has anywhere else, unless the sense requires that it should be understood as figurative.*SITI November 30, 1882, page 536.2*

3. When a figure is used, if its meaning is not obvious, an explanation will be found either in connection with it or in some other part of the Bible.*SITI November 30, 1882, page 536.3*

4. When we have found the correct meaning of a figure, or that which a symbol represents, we can substitute this meaning for that figure or symbol, and it will make good sense.*SITI November 30, 1882, page 536.4*

5. When we have the correct understanding of any passage,

however figurative the language may be, it will not contradict any other part of the Bible, figurative or literal; there will be harmony throughout.*SITI November 30, 1882, page 536.5*

6. If after a prophecy is fulfilled we find that it corresponds in every particular with the events which our principles of interpretation would lead us to expect, then we may know that our rule is correct, and we may confidently apply the same principles of interpretation to those parts of the prophecy which are yet to be fulfilled.*SITI November 30, 1882, page 536.6*

7. And most important of all, we must *believe* that the Bible is the word of God, and that as such it must be true in every particular, and, consequently, perfectly harmonious. This belief must be so strong that it amounts to absolute knowledge. Enough of the Bible has been fulfilled to demand such faith.*SITI November 30, 1882, page 536.7*

These rules will, we think, guide to a correct knowledge of the Scriptures. A few illustrations may be given. Thus: When it is stated that Job had seven thousand sheep, or that lambs were to be offered in sacrifice, we understand that literal sheep and lambs are meant. But when Christ said to Peter, “Feed my sheep, and “Feed my lambs,” we have no difficulty in understanding that he desired Peter to have a care for his disciples, and to encourage and strengthen them. The fact that Christ calls himself the Shepherd, and his followers a flock, confirms this. When Daniel speaks of seeing a goat, *Daniel 8:5, 8*, we readily conclude from the context that a literal goat is not meant, and when we come to the *21st verse* we find the explanation given. We read both in Daniel and in Revelation that the beast continued a certain number of days. We conclude that these are not literal days for two reasons. 1. They are used with reference to beasts, which are plainly declared to symbolize kingdoms. 2. The number of days indicated would, if literal, be an insignificant length of time for any kingdom to retain power, and the kingdoms there brought to view did actually exist for a much longer period. Having found the days to be symbolical, we search the Scriptures, and find that a day in prophetic language represents a year. *Numbers 14:33, 34; Ezekiel 4:6*. We then read these days as years and find that they represent a reasonable

length of time for a government to last; and when we consult history, we find that these nations did actually hold power a number of years equal to the number of days mentioned in the prophecy. Thus our chain of reasoning is complete and our mode of interpretation is established as correct beyond the shadow of a doubt. *SITI November 30, 1882, page 536.8*

And so we might go on in giving examples of interpretation. There are in the Bible many things “hard to be understood,” but it is not impossible to understand them. “If any of the lack wisdom, let him ask of God, and it shall be given him.” *James 1:5*. “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine.” *John 7:17*. Unaided human reason cannot grasp the meaning of the Scriptures; but a sanctified judgment, one that is directed by the Spirit of God, can understand. See *1 Corinthians 2:4-16*. E. J. W. *SITI November 30, 1882, page 536.9*

December 7, 1882

“Why Are They Not Seventh-day Adventists?” *The Signs of the Times*, 8, 46.

E. J. Waggoner

This question arose not long since, after reading an article in a religious journal, in which the doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventists were characterized as “pernicious.” Of course we did not admit for a moment that the doctrines are pernicious, for in that case the above question would have been answered. The journal was an organ of the Methodist denomination, and we at once instituted a comparison between the leading points of faith held by the Adventists, and the views of the Methodists upon the same subject.*SITI December 7, 1882, page 547.1*

The distinctive features of the body of Seventh-day Adventists are indicated by the name. Believing that the whole law of God is still binding, they keep the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath, the day which God sanctified in the beginning, and gave a place in the fundamental law of his government. *Genesis 2:2, 3; Exodus 20:8-11*; and they are looking for the second coming of the Lord, according to his promise. *John 14:1-3*. These are the two great truths which make Seventh-day Adventists a separate body of believers. All other points of doctrine that are held by them will be found to depend directly upon these.*SITI December 7, 1882, page 547.2*

Without stopping to inquire what there is in these doctrines that is injurious, we at once turned to the Discipline of the Methodist Church to find if the Articles of Faith contained anything that would prevent a member of that church from keeping the Sabbath. Immediately our eye rested upon the following paragraph:-*SITI December 7, 1882, page 547.3*

“The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testament, everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only mediator between God and man, being both God and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard who feign that the Old Fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given

from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites, doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity be received in any commonwealth; *no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral.*" *SITI December 7, 1882, page 547.4*

This is substantially the same as is found in the Creed of the Church of England, and is similar to that held by the Presbyterians and the principal Protestant denominations. Looking still farther to see just what the Methodist authorities meant by "the commandments which are called moral, we found the following comment of Dr. Clarke on *Exodus 20*:-*SITI December 7, 1882, page 547.5*

"It is worthy of remark that there is none of these commandments, *nor any part of one*, which can fairly be considered as merely ceremonial. All are moral, and consequently of everlasting obligation..... Through by the incarnation and death of Christ all the ceremonial law, which referred to him and his sacrifice, is necessarily abrogated; yet as none of these ten commandments refers to any thing properly ceremonial, therefore they are not abrogated.... Though Christ is said to have fulfilled the law for us, yet it is nowhere intimated in the Scripture that he has so fulfilled these TEN LAWS as if to exempt us from the necessity and privilege of being no idolaters, swearers, Sabbath-breakers, disobedient and cruel children, murderers, adulterers, thieves, and corrupt witnesses." *SITI December 7, 1882, page 547.6*

Again, Dr. Clarke in his comments on *Matthew 5:17*, paraphrases the verse thus: "I am not come to make the law of none effect-to dissolve the connection which subsists between its several parts, or the obligation men are under to have their lives regulated by its moral precepts." *SITI December 7, 1882, page 547.7*

One more quotation from Dr. Clarke will suffice to show the belief of the Methodists that the law of God is still binding on all men; it is from his comments on *Romans 7:13*:-*SITI December 7, 1882, page 547.8*

"Thus it appears that man cannot have a true notion of sin, but by means of the law of God. For this, I have already given sufficient

reason in the preceding notes. And it was one design of the law to show the abominable and destructive nature of sin, as well as to be a rule of life. It would be almost impossible for a man to have that just notion of the demerits of sin, so as to produce repentance, or to see the nature and necessity of the death of Christ, if the law were not applied to his conscience by the light of the Holy Spirit; it is then alone that he sees himself to be carnal, and sold under sin; and that the law and commandment are holy, just, and good. And let it be observed that the law did not answer this end merely among the Jews, in the days of the apostles; it is just as necessary to the Gentiles, to the present hour. Nor do we find that true repentance takes place where the moral law is not preached and enforced. Those who preach only the gospel to sinners, at best, only heal the hurt of the daughter of my people but slightly. The law, therefore, is the grand instrument in the hands of a faithful minister, to alarm and awaken sinners.”*SITI December 7, 1882, page 547.9*

These testimonies are sufficient, although many more might be given. They show that true Methodism teaches perfect obedience to the whole law of God. And when in that law we read, “*The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work,*” we cannot avoid the conclusion that a Methodist who is consistent with his profession of faith must be an observer of the seventh-day Sabbath; it is absolutely irresistible. A man who was well versed in the Scriptures, and also in the doctrines of the Methodist Church, having been a local preacher in that denomination for many years, one said to us, “A consistent Methodist must be a Sabbath-keeper. I have known that the seventh day is the Sabbath since I was a boy, and I have always held that we Methodists were not consistent with our profession.” Not long after that he decided to be “a consistent Methodist,” as he expressed it, but he soon found out that this involved his leaving the church, which he did. In order to fulfill the vows which he took when he joined the church, and which he had broken for many years, he had to leave the church. A strange affair, truly. *SITI December 7, 1882, page 547.10*

We give one testimony from Dr. Barnes, a Presbyterian, to show that the Methodists are not alone in this dilemma. In his comments on *Matthew 5:18*, he says:-*SITI December 7, 1882, page 547.11*

“The moral law as far such as grow out of the *nature of things*, and which cannot, therefore, be changed-such is the duty of loving God and his creatures. These can never be abolished, as it can never be made right to hate God, or to hate our fellow-men. Of this kind are the ten commandments, and these our Saviour has neither abolished nor superceded.” *SITI December 7, 1882, page 547.12*

And now a few words as to the second point-the Second advent of Christ. Article 3 of the M. E. Church says:-*SITI December 7, 1882, page 547.13*

“Christ did truly rise again from the dead, and... he ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the last day.” *SITI December 7, 1882, page 547.14*

Dr. Clarke, on 1 *Thessalonians 4:16*, says:-*SITI December 7, 1882, page 547.15*

“*The Lord himself*!-That is, Jesus Christ shall descend from Heaven; shall, in like manner as he was seen by his disciples to ascend; *i.e.*, in his human form; but now infinitely more glorious, for thousands of thousands shall minister unto him; and thousand times ten thousand shall stand before him; for the Son of man shall come on the throne of his glory; but who may abide the day of his coming, or stand when he appeareth?” *SITI December 7, 1882, page 547.16*

Dr. Barnes on *John 14:2, 3*, says:-*SITI December 7, 1882, page 548.1*

“‘*I go to prepare a place for you.*’ By his *going* is meant his death and ascent to Heaven. The figure is here taken from one who is on a journey, who goes before his companions to provide a place to lodge in, and to take the necessary preparations for their entertainment. It evidently means that he, by the work which he has yet to perform in Heaven, would secure their admission there, and obtain for them the blessings of eternal life. That work would consist mainly in his intercession.... ‘*Ye may be also.*’ This was language eminently fitted to comfort them. Though about to leave them, yet he would not always be absent. He would come again at the day of Judgment and gather all his friends to himself, and they should be

ever with him.”*SITI December 7, 1882, page 548.2*

See also Dr. Barnes’ notes on *1 Thessalonians 4:14-16*, where unequivocal testimony is given on this subject. Indeed, there is scarcely any doctrine more universally held than that of Christ’s second coming. There is good reason for this, for there is no truth that is more prominent in the Scriptures. We do not hear it preached very often nowadays, except by a few, but we find it in the writings of all denominations. If we should quote all that has been said and written on the subject, it would fill volumes of the SIGNS. It is very evident that the majority of Protestants, if they were consistent with their profession, would be Seventh-day Adventists. That people are not a sect who are teaching some new thing, some wicked heresy, but they are those who are endeavoring to conform to the original faith. Since, then, the fundamental truths which they hold are those that are taught by the leading men in all Protestant denominations, why are not all Seventh-day Adventists?*SITI December 7, 1882, page 548.3*

But it may be urged: You teach that the soul is not immortal; that it sleeps between death and the resurrection; that it receives immortality only through Christ; and that none go to heaven at death. That is true, but what is there pernicious in that? Does it not necessarily follow from a belief in the second coming of Christ? Read also the testimonies quoted above. The object of Christ’s coming is to “judge the quick and the dead;” can any hope to go to Heaven before they are judged? He has gone to prepare a place for his followers, *John 14:2*; would it not be presumptuous to think of going to Heaven before the place is prepared? He said that he would return again, and receive us to himself; how can we get there before he does come for us? Paul says that it is only by his returning that we are able to be for ever with him. A belief in the second coming of Christ, according to the Scriptures, necessarily involves the belief that men do not receive their reward at death. Those who hold the former and reject the latter, are inconsistent. But that all may see that we do not hold this view alone, we quote only one testimony from Dr. Barnes on *1 Thessalonians 4:14*:-*SITI December 7, 1882, page 548.4*

“‘Which sleep in Jesus.’ A most beautiful expression.... They do not

‘sleep’ in heathenism, or in infidelity, or in the gloom of atheism-but in the blessed hope which Jesus has imparted. They lie, *as he* did, in the tomb-free from pain and sorrow, and with the certainty of being raised up again. When, therefore, we think of the death of the saints, let us think of what Jesus was in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea. Such is the sleep of our pious friends in the grave; such will be our own when we die.”*SITI December 7, 1882, page 548.5*

It is true that Dr. Barnes says other things contrary to this point, but that does not invalidate this testimony, nor the plain declaration of Scripture. Many good men have held views utterly at variance with the Scriptures and have died in their erroneous belief. Their minds had not been drawn out to fully grasp certain points. But it does not follow that men who have the light, or have the chance to have it, can be saved on account of lack of knowledge. And so the question still remains, Why are they not Seventh-day Adventists? Why do not the churches live up to their published teachings on the law of God, and await with joy the second coming of their Redeemer? Is it because as Dr. Clarke says, that these things have not been applied to their consciences by the Holy Spirit? We will not presume to answer the question; but we will still continue to earnestly we pray that all the honest, who have not been enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and all those who are resisting its leading, may be found when the Saviour returns, keeping the “commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” E. J. W.*SITI December 7, 1882, page 548.6*

December 14, 1882

“Why It Is” *The Signs of the Times*, 8, 47.

E. J. Waggoner

A man who has been out in a very dark night finds it impossible to see objects distinctly, if he suddenly enters a well-lighted room. It would be just as well, yes, even better, for him if the room were at first only partially lighted, for then his eyes would the sooner accommodate themselves to the changed conditions. So also, a man who has been in a very deep well, or a cave, cannot see when he suddenly finds himself in the blazing sunlight. Everything at first appears in a haze, then the outlines of forms begin to be seen, and finally everything stands out in full relief. *SITI December 14, 1882, page 559.1*

The same principle holds good in other things. If you should place a work on geometry in the hands of an Indian just from the plains, you could not expect him to understand it. Its figures would convey no meaning whatever to him. Or if you should place a Greek Testament in the hands of a bright Sabbath-school scholar, it would be unintelligible to him, although he might be able to read the English language with ease. But give him a few years' time, and he would be able to read the Greek. Yet he would not read it readily at first. He would learn the letters, then certain forms and rules, and then he would stumbly pick out the meaning of a simple sentence. Even if a book were in a child's own language, and he were unable to read, he would have to acquire a knowledge of it gradually. And so in everything; all knowledge is gradually acquired. *SITI December 14, 1882, page 559.2*

Now let us apply this principle to another case. We claim that the Bible very plainly teaches that the seventh day is the Sabbath, and that no other day is, or can be, the Sabbath of the Lord. But the question comes up, Why did not all the good of past ages believe and teach thus, if it is Bible doctrine? Why did not the Reformers keep the Sabbath? The question is already answered. For centuries the Catholic Church had had supreme sway. Its policy was to keep men in ignorance, especially of the Bible; that was a proscribed

book. Wherever one was found, it was burned by the priest, and the possessor treated as a heretic. The priests themselves knew nothing of the Bible. Even the cardinals and archbishops, the men in highest position in the church, were ignorant of its teachings. They were taught to look upon it as a vile book, and to look to the church for their spiritual knowledge.*SITI December 14, 1882, page 559.3*

Among the common people the ignorance was of course still greater. There were very few who had ever seen a Bible. If they had seen one, the most of them would have spurned it as a loathsome thing, whose very touch would contaminate. Had they ventured to open its pages, it would have conveyed no more to them than if it were blank, for the Bible had not been translated into the language of the common people. The small portions of the Bible that the church allowed the priests to have, were written in Latin. And even if the Bible had been translated, to thousands it would still have been a blank; for where there is ignorance of the Bible, there is ignorance of the deepest kind. Very few of the people could read; many even of the nobles and princes could not; there was no incentive for them to do so. This was the night, the darkest part of the night; and the darkness, like that of Egypt, could indeed be felt.*SITI December 14, 1882, page 559.4*

But night does not always last. God's Spirit was at work in the hearts of men, and that always brings light. There were men who had all the wisdom that schools could bestow. They had been moved to acquire this knowledge by a desire to benefit their fellowmen. And yet in regard to the Bible they were as ignorant as the poorest peasant. But they were anxious to serve God, and Christ says that "if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." And so these men found the Bible, and, unmoved by the threats of bishops and popes, they translated it and studied it.*SITI December 14, 1882, page 559.5*

The Reformation gave the Bible to the people; but they could not grasp all its truth at once. Its simplest doctrines were so directly opposed to the teachings of the church, that it took a long time for their minds to comprehend them. The one great point then needed, was to make men understand that the Pope had no power to forgive

sin, or to give men license to sin, or to remit the punishment due to sin; works of penance would not suffice to gain the favor of God. "The just shall live by faith," was the watchword of the Reformation. People must first learn to believe that the Bible, not the Pope, could alone point out the way of life. *SITI December 14, 1882, page 559.6*

Some of the Reformers had glimpses of still further truth, but not all. The Reformation had only just begun when Luther and his fellow-laborers died. Many grievous papal errors still existed. Other men followed them, who were moved by the same spirit, and now the light began to dawn more brightly, and more and more of the Bible was made clear to men. They had become somewhat accustomed to its rays of light. Some rested content with the little light they had received, and refused to receive any more. But others looked still farther, and were rewarded by finding new treasures. And now a great flood of light shines forth from the sacred page, and men are beginning to endure the sight. But this could not have been done at once, any more than men who have been long confined in a dark dungeon could look at once upon the sun at noonday. And this answers the question, "Why were these things not found out before?" E. J. W. *SITI December 14, 1882, page 559.7*

December 21, 1882

“Second Coming of Christ.—Is it Near?” The Signs of the Times, 8, 48.

E. J. Waggoner

Not long since a religious journal, in stating some of the things believed by Seventh-day Adventists, said: “The Adventists believe that the coming of Christ will be personal and visible, and may occur at any moment.” The first part of this statement is correct, but as far as Seventh-day Adventists are concerned, the latter part is a mistake. We believe that Christ’s coming will be literal; that he will appear in person in the clouds, with power and glory. In the face of such texts as *Acts 1:9-11*, and *Revelation 1:7*, and many others, we cannot believe otherwise. We also believe that his coming is very near; the signs given in *Matthew 24* have been fulfilled, and Christ said that when all these things should be seen, we might know that his coming was near, even at the doors, just as surely as the near approach of summer is indicated by the putting forth of leaves in the spring. *SITI December 21, 1882, page 571.1*

While we know that Christ’s coming is near, we are prevented from setting any time for that event, by the statement, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man.” Those who professed to be able to locate the time are assuming the possession of knowledge which God has expressly declared is not revealed to man. Man has a right to search into anything concerning which God has spoken, but he need not concern himself about those things which God has not made known, or has said cannot be known. “The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever.” *Deuteronomy 29:29. SITI December 21, 1882, page 571.2*

But although the last prophecy relating to time has long since been fulfilled, there are certain things yet to transpire before the coming of the Lord. By tracing down the lines of prophecy, we can easily tell what yet remains to be accomplished. All the particulars given in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the great image have been fulfilled, except the last; the stone has yet to smite the image on the feet, and grind all to powder. The same is true of Daniel’s vision related

in *chapter 7*. The four kingdoms indicated by the lion, the bear, the goat, and the dreadful and terrible beast, have passed away. The fourth kingdom was divided into ten, and the little horn, the papacy, has come up and run its career of bloodshed, lawlessness, and blasphemy. His dominion has been taken away, “to consume and to destroy it unto the end.” *Verse 26*. All of that prophecy that now remains to be fulfilled is that the beast should be destroyed, and his body given to the burning flame, and that “the kingdom and dominion and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.” The 2300 days of *Daniel 8*, at the close of which the Sanctuary was to be cleansed, expired in 1844. Nothing of that chapter remains yet to be fulfilled except the great consummation of all things. *SITI December 21, 1882, page 571.3*

As far as these prophecies are concerned, we might look for the coming of Christ at any minute; but there is one point in the line of prophecy, contained in *Revelation 12-14*, that has not yet been fulfilled. We can easily traced it out. All commentators are agreed that the great dragon of *Revelation 12* symbolizes pagan Rome; and the leopard beast to whom “he gave his power and his seat and a great authority” *Revelation 13:2*, represents Papal Rome. These, as has been seen, have had their day. Then “another beast” “coming up out of the earth.” To those who have carefully traced the prophecy down to this point, the conclusion is irresistible that this beast represents of our own country, the United States of America. For a full and detailed exposition of this prophecy, see “Thoughts on Revelation,” and “The United States in the Light of Prophecy,” published at the office of the SIGNSSITI *December 21, 1882, page 571.4*

Of this beast it was said that it should make an image to the first beast. This we understand can be done in no other way than by bringing about such a state of things that certain ecclesiastical dogmas shall be upheld, and their observance enforced, by the secular government. This state of things is contemplated by the National Reform Association, which is working for “such a Religious Amendment to the Constitution of the United States as will indicate that this is a Christian nation, and place all Christian laws, institutions, and usages on an undeniably legal basis in the very

Charter of the Government.” The enforced observance of Sunday as the Sabbath is the main point hoped for by the adoption of this amendment the prophecy plainly indicates that this will yet be accomplished, and that before the coming of the Lord men will actually be persecuted for rendering obedience to the law of God. The spirit to do this now exists, and the power will not be long delayed. The National Reform Association numbers among its members some of the most influential clergymen, statesmen, and jurists in the land, and its ranks are rapidly filling. The Sunday question is beginning to occupy a prominent place in politics; and although it has met with some rebuffs, these only make its friends the more determined. The gigantic proportions which this matter has assumed within a few years, and especially within the last, show that a few years at most will suffice to bring it to completion. When that takes place, the world will have been fully warned, and the harvest of the earth will be reaped. *Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43; Revelation 14:9-15.* *SITI December 21, 1882, page 571.5*

Here, then, is where we stand. We are not momentarily expecting the coming of the Lord, for something still remains to be done. We cannot be deceived by those who set time, because no one can tell how long it will take for the image to be fully set up. Yet we know that it is just at the door, on the threshold, so that the removing of a very thin barrier will cause it to burst on our sight. We have no time to spend in idle conjectures. A work is given us to do, which we must faithfully perform, with watchfulness and prayer, that we may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and stand before the Son of Man. E. J. W. *SITI December 21, 1882, page 571.6*

